

College

Composition and Communication

THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE CONFERENCE ON
COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

EDITOR

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CCCC Spring Meeting, 1956

CCCC and New York City in the Spring — irresistible! The dates are **THURSDAY, FRIDAY, and SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 23, and 24, 1956**, the headquarters the **HOTEL STATLER**. Send for room reservations early.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. on Thursday, March 22, and continues through 5 p.m. Friday. The fee of \$1.50 includes coffee provided at Coffee Hours, Thursday and Friday, 10:30 to 11 a.m., in the Washington Room. Pre-registration is strongly advised. The Executive Committee, Chairman Irwin Griggs presiding, meets from 9 to 12 on Thursday morning. The first general session meets at 1:30, Thursday afternoon, with John Fisher as chairman, and John Gerber and Lyman Bryson as speakers.

The program, exceptionally full and varied, has been prepared by Program Chairman Francis Shoemaker, Assistant Chairman of CCCC.

There will be three General Sessions. The first is described above. The second on Friday afternoon, March 23, on the practical use of television in academic instruction, actually comprises two sections—the first, with Robert Tuttle of General Motors Institute as chairman, and Harold Whitehall as speaker in the Hotel Statler at 3:45; the second, a demonstration of closed-circuit TV in operation, Thomas Clark Pollock, chairman, at Washington Square College, New York University, at 4:00. The third is the annual luncheon on Saturday at 12:00, Irwin Griggs, chairman, and as speaker Lee Deighton, Science Research Associates.

Eleven panels will meet in three groups. Panels I - IV meet on Thursday evening, 8 to 9:45, on the following topics: I. Applying Structural Linguistics to Specific Teaching Problems, II. Information and Techniques from Other

Disciplines, III. The New School Population, IV. Providing Satisfactory Freshman Texts. Panels V - VIII will meet on Friday afternoon, 2 to 3:30, to consider V. The Bearing of Teaching English as a Second Language upon Freshman Composition, VI. The Communication Process, VII. Can We Really Teach Listening?, VIII. Solutions to the Problems of Large Classes. The third group of panels meet on Saturday morning, 10 to 11:30, on the following topics: IX. Trends in Secondary School and College Teaching of Language, Literature, and Other Communication Arts, X. Composition and Communication in General Education, XI. Professional Organizations as Contributing to Articulation.

To enable some registrants to participate in completed discussions of two workshops, the nineteen scheduled workshops are of two sorts: the first group, Workshops 1 - 10, will continue discussion throughout the customary four sessions on Thursday afternoon at 3, Friday morning at 9 and 11, and on Saturday morning at 8:30. The second group, Workshops 11 - 19, will meet for the first two sessions, on Thursday at 3 and Friday at 9. They will then be reconstituted with new participants but under the same chairmen for the final two sessions on Friday at 11 and Saturday morning at 8:30.

Subjects to be discussed in the workshops are as follows: 1. Professional Status of the Composition-Communication Staff, 2. The Foreign Student in the Freshman Course, 3. Problems in Teaching the Structure of Language, 4. Administering the Freshman Course, 5. Composition and Communication for Gifted Students, 6. Examinations for Entrance, Placement, and Progress, 7. Communication Theory and the Study of Communication, 8. Mass Media as Subjects

for Study, 9. Preparation of Teachers: Toward a Comprehensive Program, 10. Composition and Communication in General Education Programs.

The Workshops which will hold two two-meeting sessions will discuss 11. Skills Laboratories for Any Students, 12. Literature and Writing for Qualified Students, 13. Communication Skills: Sustaining Emphasis on Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Observing, and Demonstrating, 14. Articulation between Secondary School and College English, 15. Communication in General Education in Technical Schools and Community Colleges, 16. The New Instructor: Provision for Inservice Education, 17. Grading: Problems in Department-Wide Policy, 18. Spelling: Research in Related Fields, 19. Current Conceptions of the Language Arts: Rhetoric, Logic, Grammar.

Continuing a recently set custom, a special panel for persons attending their first CCCC meeting will be held on Thursday afternoon from 5 to 5:45 by past presidents of CCCC: Harold B. Allen, Karl W. Dykema, George S. Wykoff, T. A. Barnhart, John C. Gerber, with the most recent past president, Jerome W. Archer, as chairman.

All scheduled meetings of the Conference have been arranged to free Friday evening and Saturday after 2:15 for whatever extra-curricular activities New York's resources may suggest to Conference participants. If projects do not propose themselves, the Hospitality Committee will offer suggestions.

Members of the large and active Local Committee on Arrangements are Herman Estrin, General Chairman, Newark College of Engineering; Burtin Pollin, Chairman for Finances, High School of Music and Art; John Waldman, Chairman for Registration, Pace College; Joseph Mersand, Chairman for Publicity, Jamaica High School, assisted by Sister M. Aquin, Caldwell College; Edythe S.

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Chairman for Hospitality Mrs. Grace Nutley, Brooklyn College, will be assisted by Edward Anderson, Educational Testing Service; Marie Baldrige, Newark State Teachers College; Harry Caley, New York University; William S. Crane, City College of New York; Mary H. Davis, Finch College; Edward Knowles, Pratt Institute; Donald Sears, Upsala College; Margaret Smiley, Hunter College; and Elizabeth Ruse, New York University.

Four groups of English teachers in the Greater New York Area who customarily hold a joint spring meeting, will this year consider their joint meeting to be absorbed into the national CCCC. They and their representatives are Donald McGinn, Conference on College English, Rutgers University; Donald Sears, College English Association, Upsala College; Joseph Mersand, New York Association of Teachers of English, Jamaica High School; and J. Sherwood Weber, New York Council of College Teachers of English, Pratt Institute. CCCC mem-

bers thank these associations for their cooperation.

The dates again are **MARCH 22, 23, and 24**, and the place the **HOTEL STATLER, NEW YORK CITY**.

Unscheduled but continuous throughout the Conference Mrs. Gladys K. Brown, Little Rock Junior College, Little Rock, Arkansas, CCCC Secretary,

and several assistants will again arrange placement interviews. Any member seeking employment should upon arrival complete an information form and leave it with Mrs. Brown at the Secretary's desk in the Registration area on the Mezzanine. The printed programs shortly to be received by all CCCC members will supply details, but it would be advisable to send her at once full information of your needs. This service is discreet and free.

College and the Writer¹

J. DONALD ADAMS²

This is not going to be a long talk. The years I spent as a reporter implanted in me a horror of the long speech which has never left me. But there are a few things I would like to say about the relationship between college and the writer, in the conditions now existing, and there is nobody to whom I would rather say them than to you, who are so definitely involved in that relationship. I have strong feelings and convictions on the subject, and it may well be that some of you will disagree with them. I hope that I can be at least provocative.

College today and college as I knew it as an undergraduate and as a young instructor are two different worlds. There are aspects of that earlier world which were very pleasant, and perhaps not as evident today, but they have little or nothing to do with what concerns us here, and I shall not speak of them. What does concern us is that the college world, since I was an active part of it, has greatly widened, that its windows look out more frequently on a larger world than that of the college itself. It is less cloistered than it was, and in

much closer touch with the concerns of the world outside. Anybody of my generation who visits the colleges feels that at once. The atmosphere is a different one, a more vibrant one. One way of putting it would be to say that the college has become more contemporaneous. It still gives, and rightly so, a large part of its attention to the past, but it is much more intimately involved with the present. Increasingly its faculty members take part in the work of the world outside, whether in government, in business, or in the arts. And its student body is immeasurably more aware of that world outside.

One result of this development has been the welcome extended by the colleges to the professional writer whose concern is not primarily, or perhaps not at all, with scholarship. In steadily increasing numbers he is, as the phrase goes, in residence. Most frequently he is a poet, but he may also be either a novelist or a critic. I am glad he has been made welcome. I think his presence is one more token of the closer link that has been forged between the so-called academic and the non-academic world. For the student who is interested in writing, who wants to write himself, he makes college a more exciting place, and a writ-

¹ An address delivered at the CCCC Luncheon, Hotel Commodore, New York, November 25, 1955

² Contributing Editor, New York Times Book Review

ing career something more tangible than it might otherwise have been. If he is a good teacher as well as a good writer, and even sometimes if he is not, he performs a useful function. That function has, however, come to be identified with a phrase that I heartily dislike. The phrase is, "creative writing." I dislike it because of the narrow meaning it has come to have, and the narrow practice for which it stands. If it continues to be used in the sense now commonly attached to it, I should like to see it stricken out of every college curriculum.

You must all of you be aware of how great a part, how powerful a part, phrases play in our contemporary world. We have all seen them come and go, exercising in their time a kind of incantation, often possessing a power to influence and sway masses of men, which is beyond the bounds of reason. "America first," "unconditional surrender," "bring the boys home," and so on. As Russell Davenport remarked, they develop unpredictable authority. We too seldom stand up to the force that has gathered behind them.

I think that "creative writing," in the sense of its present use, is one of the most misleading and within the field of its influence, one of the most potentially harmful in current circulation. As you all know, when the term "creative writing" is employed in describing a college course, or in casual conversation, it is understood to mean writing either in the field of fiction or of poetry. It may be extended also to the play, though that is customarily treated separately. All the other great branches of literature—biography, history, the essay, are excluded. It is a distinction that to my mind makes no sense, and one which can create a great deal of misunderstanding, and result also in a great deal of misapplied effort.

It creates, or at least tends to create, a wrong set of values in the mind of the

student who feels, usually in a rather vague way, that he wants to write. It may be years before he finds the medium of expression that is best suited to his capabilities. And he starts out, in the colleges, by having set before him a false notion of what the creative act actually is. As Jacques Barzun has pointed out in all the arts save that of writing, the fact that a man works in one of them implies his acceptance as a creative artist. But in writing, unless his chosen medium is the short story, the novel, the poem or the play, he is merely a writer of something that might be called expository prose. That is all stuff and nonsense, and the sooner we disabuse our minds of this misconception, the better for writing in our colleges and for writing in general. There is even, though Heaven knows, we don't see too much of it, such a thing as creative criticism.

As a result of this invidious distinction, the young student who is attracted to writing is encouraged to narrow his conception of literary achievement, to restrict his appreciation of the many forms in which delight can be conveyed by the happy use of words and by the power of constructive effort. Art is a very wide word, and we do it a grave disservice when we narrow it.

Art and creativeness are practically synonymous terms. The mere fact that a piece of work is cast in fictional form is no guarantee that it is a work of art. We are all familiar with works of fiction that are nothing more than reporting on its dullest level. I can think of newspaper stories, mere records of fact, if you like, but done with imaginative grasp and with the power of the vivifying phrase, which were more truly works of art than some novels many times their length. What piece of writing, whether in prose or poetry, is more a work of art than the Gettysburg address? Most of the novels written in its time have sunk without a trace. Those three hundred

words are imperishable.

It is possible to bring as much art to the writing of biography or history as to the writing of fiction on its highest level. What adds to our confusion, perhaps, is the fact that, even without art, biography and history can fulfill their primary purpose, which is to inform, whereas fiction without art is a poor thing indeed. But when biography or history are written with full command of their potentialities, they stand on the same level of creativeness as the greatest of novels.

Merely because the event described in a history actually occurred, while the scene pictured in a novel may be imaginary, does not mean that the one is less an act of creation than the other. Merely because the subject of a biography once existed, while the character in a novel may be, as he usually is not, completely the figment of the author's imagination, does not mean that the one is more completely and convincingly realized than the other. Bruce Catton's historical recreations of the Civil War are, in a truer sense, more creative works than is the run-of-the-mill Civil War novel. They create pictures which come alive, which transport us. Francis Parkman, writing of the escape from death of the Jesuit priest Father Jogues, is no less the artist than Willa Cather telling us how death came to Father La Tour. What character in fiction lives for us with more reality, or more art, than Boswell's Johnson?

There was an editorial writer for the *New York Sun*, and later for the *New York Times*, whose name, Edward M. Kingsbury, remained unknown. His work was unsigned, and none of it was ever collected in a book, merely because, through some kink in his composition, he steadfastly opposed the idea. Yet he wrote prose that was unexcelled by any American writer of his time. It had a clarity, force, and imagination which outshone most of the creative writers

whose reputations were made during his lifetime. He belonged to that generation of newspaper writers who accepted anonymity without chagrin; a lot of first-rate writing lies buried under that attitude.

Our writing courses, it seems to me, are too much concerned with the techniques of fiction, and with critical theories regarding the function and nature of poetry. These are matters to which any intelligent writer will give increasing attention as he goes forward in his work. If they are pressed upon him too early, and particularly before he has found his own medium of expression, they are likely to make him overly self-conscious, and cause him to adopt attitudes which may not be native to his own temperament and attitudes.

The most valuable thing, I believe, which the beginning writer can obtain from any writing course is an increase in his power over words, in his ability to make them do his bidding. This can most readily be gained by concentration upon the fundamentals of writing, without any special regard for the form in which they are to be exercised. We are burdened with too much writing that is untrained and unskilled in these fundamentals, as every magazine or publishing house editor is aware.

Let us broaden the sense of the forms which creative writing can assume. Let us emphasize more than we do the mastery of language, the plain, hard, unremitting work it takes to make words perform the magic of which they are capable. I would like to see the students who are enrolled in what are known as courses in creative writing, encouraged to express themselves in any form which they would like to try. We would be spared a lot of trivial and abortive efforts to be creative in only a restricted sense. Let us shake ourselves free from stupid literary snobbery and get down to brass tacks.

Perspective and Personnel in Communication Courses¹

THEODORE B. STRANDNESS²

When, back in 1946, I packed away my navy uniform and began looking about for opportunities to earn my civilian livelihood once more as an English teacher, the best offer I received (best paying, that is) came from a college department head who spoke of work in something he called communication skills. I had never heard the term before, but when I learned what the aims of the course were, I felt that I was on reasonably familiar ground and took the job. After a month or two of teaching, I settled into my new role feeling pleased and somewhat surprised at the ease with which I had become a practicing civilian once more.

During the Christmas holidays of that first year I saw one of my college English teachers of pre-war, undergraduate days. All was warmth and heartiness until I revealed the nature of my new teaching assignment. "I don't," he announced quietly, "think much of the so-called communications course." We didn't pursue the subject; no point in arguing over something about which, I guessed, neither of us knew as much as he might. The rest of our conversation limped a bit, and I came away feeling that somehow, suddenly, in the eyes of my old college English teacher I had left the reservation and was a changed Indian. Why, I'm still not sure.

A colleague of mine was recently informed by one of *his* erstwhile professors (a teacher of speech in this case) that if

he had his way there would be none of "this communications stuff" in any institution he was associated with. For such a person, apparently, the communications course is a new and alarming intruder on the academic scene. At last year's meeting of the CCCC I was startled to hear a speaker declare that communication teachers are "adapters" engaged, as he said, in teaching students to "accommodate," to "adjust," to regard "mid-western, middle-class culture" as "the culmination of human achievement." Teachers of communication, he said, are "anti-intellectuals," as opposed to men like himself who "belong to the generation of composition rather than the generation of communication." No wonder my old teacher regarded me as a changed Indian. Had I but known!

By contrast there is the person who encounters the communications idea with a sense of great discovery, hails it with a glad shout, and goes to work with a convert's zeal. To him the word "communication" has a mystical voltage all its own, a power of bringing excitement and joy to such as but speak its name in a dedicated and receptive spirit. In the beginning was the word, and he's got it.

For the run-of-the-mine variety of communication teacher, both of these extreme and frequently wearisome types must be accepted as occupational hazards. Much could be said about them both. What I wish to emphasize here is the thing which they have in common and which, unfortunately, too many of us share with them, namely a lack of historical perspective in their attitude toward the combined skills approach of

¹ This and the following article by S. Stewart Gordon were presented in Panel 3, Friday, March 5, 1954, during the CCCC Spring meeting, Hotel Jefferson, St. Louis. The third paper in this panel by George Kelly was published in CCC, December, 1955.

² Assistant Professor of Communication Skills, Michigan State College

the communication course. The jurisdictional contest which has engaged speech and English departments during the last forty years or so has made it convenient to ignore the fact that when Edward Channing, professor of rhetoric at Harvard from 1819 to 1857, declared his concern with "all communication by language," he was merely voicing the traditional conception of his task. This same conception, to cite but one other example, had been exemplified in the work of his predecessor, John Quincy Adams. One hesitates to class these two gentlemen as "anti-intellectuals," but then classification cannot always be both honest and kind. The evidence against them is damningly plain.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the growing emphasis on the art of elocution caused rhetoric to turn more and more toward criticism and composition, a trend which culminated in Barrett Wendell's *English Composition*, published in 1891. From Wendell's famous "English A" derived the type of course which came to be known generally as "Freshman Composition." The long and flourishing reign of this type of course is familiar to us all.

So long and flourishing was it, indeed, that thinking in terms which might seem to challenge it was like challenging the stars in their courses. That it was in fact being challenged, however, even in its most flourishing period, I was recently surprised to discover while looking through some early volumes of the *English Journal*. At the very first meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, on November 29, 1912, John M. Clapp, an early leader in the organization, addressed the college section in these words:

I would substitute, therefore [he has discussed the value of work in speaking], for the existing Freshman Composition, with its two written themes a week, a course mainly in exposition and argumentation, using both oral and written exercises in

equal proportion. The instructors . . . should not be merely studious young persons with a doctorate and perhaps a notion for style. They should be grown men of more robust type, of sound but not fussy literary taste, interested rather in people, things, and ideas than in aesthetic devices. They should use a minimum of red ink, but they should spend much more time than now is usual in oral conference with their students, talking with them singly and in small groups . . . To my mind the writing and talking are of equal importance, and the same standard of sense, accuracy, and trimness of form should be applied to both . . . This course would not be in any special way a drill in what is called public speaking. The oral exercises would not be orations, or formal debates; they would be exercises in simple talking, such as, in the later life of both men and women, are called for almost daily in the ordinary course of social and professional duty. [Vol. II, 26-27.]

Here, obviously, is a prospectus which would serve quite well for most of the self-consciously "new" courses in communication skills which have emerged during the last few years.

In another of these early volumes I learned of the proposal of the State Commissioner of Education of Massachusetts that a course be set up which would be divorced from literary study and be devoted instead to reading, writing, speaking, and "effective listening." For such a course, he felt, the regular training of the teacher of English literature would be inappropriate. (Vol. III, 671.)

I learned also that in October, 1915, Professor J. M. Thomas of the University of Minnesota pointed out that "Those who criticize our exclusive devotion to training in writing and the consequent neglect of training in speaking have good ground on which to stand." Speech training, he felt, offers "many advantages, the chief of which lies in the fact that the speaker is always addressing a real audience. All prose discourse must be considered to be communicative. As such it presupposes some reader or body of readers. The chief difficulty in securing

satisfactory results from theme-writing springs from the fact that it is largely exercise work—that is, only make-believe communication.” (Vol. IV, 488-493.) All of which is a very familiar and congenial line of reasoning for the present-day teacher of communication. Professor Thomas, moreover, was not merely being pleasantly theoretical. He was writing after eight years of experience with the combined skills type of approach, having begun “experimenting,” as he says, in 1907.

That such views were not particularly strange is perhaps best indicated by the statement of Wilbur Hatfield, editor of the *English Journal*, in December, 1924: “Thoughtful teachers of composition,” he declared, “are becoming almost unanimous in the opinion that speech skill is more important than writing skill—is, in fact, the chief foundation of the latter.” (Vol. XIII, 754.) “News and Notes” for the issue of January, 1926, states that at a meeting of the Minnesota Association of Teachers of English, Mr. Hatfield “made a strong plea for ‘Training in Communication’ . . . real communication as it is needed in actual life . . . He emphasized the importance of training in conversation . . . and also the value of training in listening, which is often neglected.” (Vol. XV, 78.)

I shall here assert rather than demonstrate in further detail the vigor and continuity through the last several decades of the kind of thinking which we generally identify with the combined skills type of program that has emerged since the war. Anyone who doubts that such a further demonstration could be made should look through the early volumes of the *English Journal*. It is a highly instructive experience, one that should prove unsettling to those who feel that with the advent of recent courses in communication skills we are entering a markedly new era, either good or bad, in teaching the language arts.

I am not suggesting that there are in fact no recent developments in communication courses. Current interest in general semantics, an increased awareness of the role of mass media in our present-day culture, an impatience with the prescriptive approach of the older handbooks, a recognition of the meaning of group dynamics as concerns man’s use of language, sensitivity to propaganda techniques—these are just some of the things that have brought marked changes in many of the courses which have been developed. But none of them are the peculiar possession of any particular type of program, whatever combination of skills it may undertake to deal with. They are things which courses devoted to general language instruction now ordinarily share, a fact which is plainly illustrated in the amount of interchange which takes place among such courses, both of teachers and materials.

There are many new and hopeful (or, if you will, threatening) developments in language study programs, but the combined skills approach is not one of them. Thinking in terms of one “generation” of language instructors as “good” and of another as “bad” is not only delusive; it keeps us from devoting to our common problems the kind of attention which they need and which the meetings of this organization over the last several years have generally supplied. Most of us, I believe, have discovered in these meetings that if we will just forget this or that potentially divisive label, we are apt to find good Indians almost anywhere—if, as Justice Holmes used to say, we are able to “think things instead of words.”

But if we accept the idea that there is nothing fundamentally new or strange about the communication skills approach, we then face the question of just what it is about the post-war develop-

ment of this kind of course that is really significant. What is it that has made for the "new climate" which we all recognize? I shall not venture a single, all-sufficient answer, but I suggest that the answer lies far less in theoretical developments having to do with the course itself than in certain administrative developments affecting the preparation, pay, and professional status of those teaching it.

In the *CCCC Bulletin* for October, 1951, Robert S. Hunting then of Duke University has this to say about training teachers of freshman composition:

I can unfortunately offer no real solution because, under existing conditions, there is none and can be none, from a graduate student's or beginning instructor's point of view. The graduate student looks forward to be a full-time instructor, and both the graduate student and the instructor are early made aware of the fact that one usually cannot afford to take such an interest in freshman composition that he becomes a recognized authority on the subject. [Professional advancement] is only slightly dependent on one's competence in teaching freshman composition. From the . . . instructor's point of view, therefore, it is absurd to waste time in training to teach a course which, even though it is extraordinarily important in the whole academic program, a wholesome regard for his own professional advancement compels him to think of as a mere stepping-stone. Teaching freshman composition thus must remain a not-too-demanding way of earning a living while the beginning instructor gives his primary attention . . . to getting his degree, preparing learned articles, and generally getting ready to teach advanced courses. I am therefore suggesting that, under present conditions, insofar as a graduate student or beginning instructor spends time with a training course and gives more than the minimum required time to teaching freshman composition, he is doing hurt to his professional career. Willfully to do such hurt is manifestly foolish.

Painful as this description is, I doubt that many would question its truth. The dilemma is a real one and offers, as the writer says, no hope of solution "under present conditions." The significant thing

about the post-war development of communication skills programs, in my opinion, is the fact that they have brought about a change in these conditions. If my observation is correct, this change has been primarily the result of an administrative decision to abandon the traditional composition course, put a more ambitious language course in its place (frequently as part of a program in general education), and encourage the teachers of such a course by offering them the same opportunities for promotion and pay that apply to other worthy fields of academic endeavor.

This improvement in the professional status of the communication skills teacher has been accompanied by an awareness of the need for him to be trained realistically for his job. Here again we face the dilemma of a felt need on the one hand and a traditional inability or disinclination to satisfy that need on the other. When Harold Allen recently interviewed instructors in a variety of freshman English programs around the country, some of the needs expressed to him were as follows (*CCCC Bulletin*, May, 1952): a need "to know something of current issues and trends in the field of higher education," a need "to know something about how people learn skills and information—call it the psychology of learning, if you will," "enough about testing and measuring to be able to do an honest job of evaluating the significant progress of . . . students," training in speaking, "familiarity with the structural principles of modern English," "rhetorical theory," "a knowledge of semantics," "practical and applied logic," principles of group discussion, "principles of teaching reading," "familiarity with the types of audio-visual aids available, with their operation, and with the uses to which they can be put." It would be easy to add to the list. A fair question to ask is how many of such needs, under traditional circumstances, have ever been

or will ever be met? Anyone who is in doubt of the answer should consult the graduate committee of the nearest English department.

One of the workshops of the 1951 meeting of the CCCC was devoted to "Teacher-Training for Composition or Communication." According to the report of that workshop (*CCCC Bulletin*, December, 1951), there was general agreement that present training was inadequate, and "predominant opinion favored, as a practical minimum, a single course supplementing the present (English) curriculum." At the same time it was recognized that "training to teach communications would seem to require diversified undergraduate or graduate study in psychology, sociology, even the history of newspapers." There, once more, is the dilemma—if, that is, one is really going to face the problem of graduate training for the teacher of communication skills. One can, of course, ignore it, give a program the magic name of "communication," and just pretend that the teacher is prepared to do his job. But really facing the problem means choosing between the traditional course taught by persons with traditional backgrounds of training or a new kind of course taught by a new kind of person. A makeshift substitute for this second alternative is to use persons with traditional backgrounds and provide the necessary additional training through "in-service" programs. Given time, this can be done; but it is a makeshift.

The report of the 1951 workshop goes on to say that there was "general agreement . . . that it is not now prudent, if

it ever will be, for the graduate student to prepare himself exclusively to teach in the fields of composition or communication." But prudent or not, that very thing is now in fact taking place. The other day I received a letter from the head of the communications program at one of our larger Middle Western universities stating that they "now have . . . a plan by which the communication instructor can get a Ph.D. specifically planned to prepare him for teaching and administration in the college communication program. One instructor on my staff is working toward this degree; two faculty members elsewhere have had their programs approved through summer work and will be here on leave to complete their course; and three other instructors elsewhere probably will follow this plan. So far the plan has not been announced at all except for my mentioning it to people in casual conversation." The same thing has already happened at other schools in various parts of the country.

In the *Journal of General Education* for October, 1947, Porter Perrin has a provocative article entitled "Who Should Teach Communication?" Among other things, he concludes that the job of the communication teacher is such that it "deserves to be made a career in itself." As I pointed out earlier, and as Porter Perrin would be the first to agree, this is far from being a new idea. But new or old, the important thing is that in the recent development of communication courses it is once more finding expression in fact.

Recent Developments in Communication Courses

S. STEWART GORDON¹

Anyone speaking on a subject so broad as developments in a field as wide as that of Communication Courses can give only a partial view. My view is based in part on reading but largely on first-hand observation, during 1952-53, of some twenty-four programs in twenty-four colleges and universities. Eleven years ago I made a similar survey, involving fewer colleges, and my reason for appearing here is based on whatever perspective I may have acquired from these two admittedly limited series of observations.

First, I would like to comment on a subject perhaps slightly off the point but one which seems to me to be of significance to all teachers, and particularly to teachers of communication. This subject is that of certain changes in the college program as a whole which seem to me to have been brought about, at least in part, by the development of communication courses. We have all long been familiar, for example, with the traditional remedial course in grammar: English O or English X, or "Remedial English." Now, there are a whole battery of specialized courses in most schools, courses which have grown up largely in the last dozen years, designed to remedy the deficiencies of students in reading, writing, speech, spelling, and vocabulary. This growth has coincided so strikingly with the new emphasis on communication that it is hard to deny a causal connection. In some cases, these specialized remedial, or "improvement" courses may have been inspired by opposition to communication courses. That is, they may represent a defense, an attempt to keep skills taught separately, by specialists. To the extent that this is true, it seems

to me regrettable, but the effect on the whole has been a good one.

In addition to this horizontal development, with its enriched program primarily for freshmen, there has also been a vertical development. A program such as that at Colgate, with core courses throughout the four years, with a writing program throughout the four years, and with Communication given in the sophomore year, was once unique. Now, this vertical follow-through on the student has become increasingly popular. I visited, for example, one teachers college where in addition to the Freshman communication course, and specialized remedial courses, there was a required senior seminar in Communication. In many institutions, there are special literacy tests required of students after the freshman year. At Arkansas, for example, all Juniors must pass a test primarily in writing. If they fail, they must take a special course before they can be graduated. In many schools, writing is now specified as part of the required sophomore course in literature or humanities, and, with the increased emphasis on the discussion method along with the increased emphasis on communication, speaking is playing an ever greater part in the total education of the college student. At the State University of New York Teachers College at Plattsburg, for example, sophomore literature is taught in "symposia," with student chairmen and student contributors to topics in English literature. One-third of the whole course is handled in this way. This increased amount of speaking in subject-matter courses I would call a development caused in no small measure by the general interest generated by the communication course.

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Communication courses are also affecting the composition course. Indeed, in some places it is becoming difficult to distinguish the two. At Vermont, I saw being worked out one experimental communication course, and at the same time in the "traditional" composition course one speech per semester was being required along with the themes. At a small college in Missouri, I observed the same development except that a higher proportion of speech was required, in a course operating under the traditional title of "Freshman English." Despite a certain amount of name-calling that still goes on, even at conferences like this one, between ardent representatives of communication and composition courses, a great number of practicing teachers seem to be evolving a working compromise, and are teaching as many skills as their limitations of time and sectional enrollments permit.

If we turn from the effect of communication courses on the college program to developments within communication courses themselves, a number of trends may be observed. The first I would like to mention must be called a negative, or reverse, trend. When communication courses first achieved popularity, and sometimes notoriety, there was good reason for thinking that from their very nature they would receive increased budgets which would permit them to teach fewer students more times a week. There seems to be no question that a communication staff takes on a greater responsibility than one concerned primarily or solely with writing. Clearly, for the mechanics of class presentation of oral composition more time is required. But too many staffs have changed the name of their course, or have had the administration do it for them—have tried to teach speaking and listening along with reading and writing—but have failed to change the number of meetings per week or the number of students per

meeting. My personal sampling is small, but of the communication courses I have seen, well over half meet three times a week. And they are trying to do the job with too many students per section. Among the schools I visited, class sizes were not noticeably lower in communication courses than in composition ones. I found one school in New York State—Harpur College—with only twelve to fifteen students per section, and two or three around the country with twenty-two or fewer, but I found as many with twenty-five to twenty-eight students. It is true that most of the well-publicized courses, like those at Iowa and Michigan State and Minnesota, have managed either to increase the number of meetings a week, reduce the enrollment per section, or do both. But the majority have taken on the added responsibility without adequate support. I submit that no teacher can do justice to a communication course which meets three times a week in a section of twenty-seven students.

There are, fortunately, more hopeful trends. One is that there has been real progress toward the integration of writing and speaking, which means, of course, real progress in the mutual understanding and respect of those trained primarily in English and those trained in Speech. As we all know, one of the basic arguments for the communication course is that the likenesses within the skills are basic and the differences are superficial. The communication course takes advantage of the likenesses. When the course is broken up into separate skills taught separately, its point is dulled. Some courses are still so divided. I have read in the literature of one, and I observed another, where one instructor taught the student reading and writing two days a week, and another grabbed him on the third day to put him through speech exercises which bore no apparent relation to anything he had done before. All this, ostensibly, in one

single course called "Communication."

This kind of situation exists seldom today, and even more important, the Speech-trained versus English-trained dispute is, on most campuses, all but forgotten. Most of us can remember that only a dozen years ago this was the paramount problem of the communication course. Today, one has the feeling that understanding has largely replaced suspicion and jealousy. In staff meetings where the antagonism between the Speech Ph.D. and the English Ph.D. once underlay every discussion, the uneasy truce seems now to be genuinely a thing of the past.

There are other changes within communication courses. As you know, when "communication" was first publicized, some strange courses emerged. There was a small but articulate group who tried to glorify the communication course by placing it firmly in the ranks of Science, with a capital S. We even had reports, accurate or not, of courses where white-coated clinicians injected shots of Korzybski and Hayakawa into the patients. As the growing pains of communication courses have passed, this super-scientific, technological view of the basic course in communication has fortunately passed too. The trend is not toward science, or pseudo-science, as the panacea, but a reverse one—toward the humanities.

This trend may be seen most clearly in the attitude towards linguistics one finds among teachers. Linguistics is, per se, a science. Teachers I have talked to are more and more emphasizing that this science is, for our purposes, a means and not an end, and that communication is not a science but an art. What we want freshmen to learn is not the science of linguistics, interesting and valuable as this is, but the art of communication.

If within our own ranks we have had differences of opinion about the place of linguistics, from outside the communica-

tion faculties has come, and still comes, another attack on the communication course. This is the concept of the course as a glib, slick, "modern" substitute for sound basic training in writing. Many courses, though by no means all, have as you know used as part of their subject-matter mass media of communication. Mass media, more than any other subject, have been for colleagues in other departments and particularly for the lay and literate public a red flag. The teaching of mass media, or of communication through mass media, is to them an outward and visible sign of an inward emptiness, a sign of what William Whyte, Jr., an articulate staff writer and editor of *Fortune*, calls "the new illiteracy," when he pours scorn on the "communication laboratory," where "facilities are available for practical things like radio and TV debating."¹

It is true that many communication courses spend much time with mass media, but this subject, like most others, can be treated seriously or trivially. I have never been convinced that the subject-matter studied in a skills course—the reading and listening done—is of first importance. Valid justifications can be found for the study of most subject matters. An old and honorable, and, I think, legitimate part of Freshman English courses is the study of and practice in persuasion. Mass media lend themselves very well to this study and practice. I don't think the study of debate, whether on radio or TV, is a sign of "the new illiteracy." What is important is how it is studied.

The reason I mention mass media and bring up the study of persuasion is that it seems to me a change is taking place in the way persuasion is being taught. In my tour of colleges I was struck by the number of adoptions of a recent popularization of logic. Everybody who

¹ "The New Illiteracy," *Saturday Review*, November 21, 1953, p. 35.

adopted it was not too happy with it. Many thought some of the distinctions over-refined for freshman consumption. The objections I heard were significantly only to the author's method of presentation of logic, not to logical analysis as a part of the study of persuasion. At the same time, there seems to be a trend away from analysis of speaking and writing in terms of the catchwords of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis and the techniques of General Semantics.

In the classic rhetorics, logic is often one of the means used to analyze the persuasive piece. Arguments do sometimes appear in speeches, and logical analysis is one way to get at an understanding of them. It also is often useful in revealing the lie and the half-truth. I am glad to see a study of arguments creeping back into the curriculum. In this day of the sub-committee inquisi-

tion, of the distortion of truth by those in high places, it may well be that the most significant development within communication courses is a revival of what we sorely need: the rigorous study of the art of rhetoric.

In summary, the communication course is affecting other courses in the college program, and is developing within itself. The internal changes are not all good, but as the course has gained status and maturity, a greater integration of skills has occurred, as a result of greater understanding on the part of those who have been trained in different skills. As teachers have stopped feuding, they have looked more analytically at the course, and have perceived more clearly its proper end and, hence, the values and limits of certain means, like linguistics and logic, in the attainment of that end.

Rationales in the Teaching of the Freshman Course

Panel Four, 1954 Conference on
College Composition and Communication¹

RECORDER'S REPORT, SISTER MARY HILARY²

This panel convened in the Crystal Room at 10:45 a.m. Friday, March 5, under the chairmanship of Robert C. Pooley, of the University of Wisconsin. Although three papers had been planned, only two were read because Mr. W. Arthur Turner of Oberlin College was snowbound. Professor Pooley, summarizing the traditional approach to the present discussion as it would have been presented by Professor Turner, noted that the rationale behind the freshman course was generally taken for granted. The instructor chose a text, tests, and workbooks, and said little or nothing about the motive behind the course.

"Communications" may be simply an innocuous term to fit the freshman course into the pattern of "general education" stressed in many colleges today.

Professor Pooley also pointed out that traditionally the freshman course was a writing course. Its rationale was simply a conviction that writing can be improved by instruction and practice. Underlying this was a further notion: that reading great literature developed ideas. Furthermore, there was a distinct division between writing and speech. Integration of communicative skills was unthought of. Traditionally, writing progress rested upon minute and painstaking analysis of students' writing, with emphasis on conference, revision, and further writing. This personal contact

¹ Held on Friday, March 3, 1954, Hotel Jefferson, St. Louis. The two papers presented in this panel follow immediately in this issue.

² Sacred Heart College, Wichita.

with the instructor was a vital part of the course. Now the larger number of students has lessened the possibility of this personal touch.

Glenn H. Leggett, University of Washington, read a paper on the middle-of-the-road view of the present nature of the freshman course in a large state university.

Finally, Miss Jean Malmstrom, Western Michigan College, read a paper on the communication course—the modern combination of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

At the conclusion of Professor Malmstrom's paper, questions and comments from the floor were welcomed.

A. R. Brooks, Morehouse College, asked Professor Malmstrom for an objective evaluation of the communication course. Miss Malmstrom replied that communication instructors hope to prepare their students to do a better job in life, to talk decently, to write better, to read more intelligently. In other words, it is the pragmatic approach: to convince the student that books contain ideas, and that four-syllable words are often needed to get or to communicate ideas.

Mrs. M. Y. Brown, Florida A & M, asked Miss Malmstrom for further evaluation of the course.

Professor Malmstrom replied that in her school rhetoric (the traditional approach) and communication (the modern approach) are parallel courses, and uniform examinations are given for both. The desired result in the communication course is really the same as in the traditional rhetoric course. She summarized her position by stating that composition well taught is communication.

Jarvis E. Bush, Wauwatosa (Wisconsin) High School, asked about the evaluation of the communication course when the students go on into literature courses. Professor Malmstrom replied that

they have found no appreciable difference.

Cecil B. Williams, Oklahoma A & M, asked what happens to the speech department. Professor Malmstrom replied that speech and English teachers meet regularly. The communication course is in the general education division, but communication teachers are also active in their own departments. Williams then asked whether these members collaborate. Yes, Miss Malmstrom replied, the various instructors prepare uniform syllabi, choose texts, and hold frequent meetings.

George C. Grise, Austin Peay State College, pointed out that in their college the teachers for each communication section receive guidance from speech teachers for that part of their work.

Raymond E. Mizer, De Pauw, noted that in his college there are two instructors for each section of communications: one from the English department and one from the speech department. He also pointed out that in some colleges various other departments are represented.

Thomas J. Phillips, Purdue, commented that in some colleges an instructor from the department of English is in charge of each section, assisted by a graduate student from the speech department.

Miss Lilia Villa, graduate assistant at the State University of Iowa, stated that their communication courses are divided into three types: writing-emphasis sections, under the English department, assisted by English majors; speech-emphasis sections, under the direction of the speech department with assistance from speech majors; and reading-emphasis sections under the psychology department with assistance from that department.

Mr. Grise asked Mr. Leggett whether the traditional rhetoric courses were supposedly preparing students for further

academic work, whereas communication courses were emphasizing preparation for life. Mr. Leggett replied that their purpose is to help students help themselves in further study and in life.

Mr. Brooks emphasized the need for integration—unless a communication course achieves a high degree of integration it misses its chief purpose for existence.

Bryson Jaynes, State College of Washington, noted that the philosophy seems to be the same, whether we call it rhetoric, or composition, or communication—the aim is to develop effectiveness in communicating ideas. He feels that it is a problem of method rather than aim or result.

Professor Pooley posed the question whether the writing skill is more important than other skills.

Russell Cosper, Purdue, stated that the average person does 47% listening, about 16% reading, and only 9% writ-

ing. Since we do so much listening, we ought to have practice in that art.

Donald R. Tuttle, Fenn College, commented that since writing is a difficult and somewhat artificial activity, the student needs more help with it.

Oscar M. Haugh, University of Kansas, sees a distinction between formal and informal English, and believes that students need help on the more formal style which is proper to serious writing. He believes that there is a gain when formal and informal English (writing and speech) are taught together.

George E. Smock, Indiana State Teachers College, asked whether communication simply gives more emphasis on speech.

The meeting closed on this note of questioning of method and procedure rather than final aim in the freshman course.

Adjournment at 12:18 p.m.

The Large State University

GLENN H. LEGGETT¹

I begin with a rather obvious and perhaps apologetic statement: the rationale of the Freshman English course in a large state university is a mixture of the physical facts peculiar to such universities with a pedagogical theory which is more workable than exciting. Perhaps more than a little of the theory may be an attempt to justify the physical facts. But justified or not, the physical situation influences the nature of the Freshman course; and at the risk of telling many of you what you already know, let me describe the situation to you.

On the one side we have this set of hard facts: on hand are some hundreds of freshmen, all of whom, regardless of interest and educability, are required to take the Freshman English course. By

and large, they are no better and no worse than students attending any other kind of educational institution. There are just more of them and consequently the number of average and below-average students among them seems more terrifying than it would be otherwise. Their presence at a university indicates, moreover, that as a group they have a wider range of vocational interests than those of students at smaller institutions. They are would-be doctors, pharmacists, oceanographers, biologists, coaches, scientific farmers, foresters, nurses, teachers, dietitians, engineers, dental technicians, and so forth. Many of them will eventually get a degree called Bachelor of Arts, but few of them are interested, at least in the beginning, in the concept at the center of the degree—that is, a

¹ University of Washington.

"liberal arts" education. They want to be specialists, and they want to start right now.

On the other side, and composed of a set of equally hard facts, is the university's Department of English, almost always as large in itself as the combined faculty of small colleges. Long ago it held the door open wide while its specialists in speech trotted down the hall to establish their own department. But even so it still has an astonishing assortment of people: research librarians, historians, critics (old and new), writers, editors, linguists, lecturers, fellows, temporary instructors, graduate assistants, and sometimes even a poet. Its functions are as diverse as its personnel. It edits learned journals; promotes scholarly publication; directs beginning and advanced graduate students; establishes programs for English majors; sets up courses for people who want to write novels, plays, poetry, and technical reports; provides service courses in general literature for non-majors; tries to teach hundreds of freshmen, of extremely varying talent, to do the hardest thing in the world—write well; organizes special clinics for sub-freshmen who can be said, with some exactness, to have trouble spelling their own names; provides special tutors for foreign-born students who cannot understand the assignments in chemical engineering and political science and strangely enough hate the English teacher because of it; and finally operates a free-answer bureau on grammatical points and a relatively free manuscript-reading service for taxpayers. To complain that all three activities are not done well strikes me, at least at this moment, as unnecessarily cruel; that they are done at all seems remarkable.

All of these activities of course do not carry the same promotional rewards and prestige, and the complaint that hundreds of freshmen are often made to suffer with inexperienced young teachers so that

the prestige and convenience of a dozen professors may be inviolate has some justice. But the complaint simply underscores the two diverging purposes that face every university: to minister to the undergraduate sons and daughters of articulate taxpayers, and to train graduate students for the professions and for research. Though the first purpose is enormously important, and the one to which I am personally committed, I hope I shall not be considered traitorous if I suggest in passing that the second purpose is at the core of a university's function. The resolution of the problem of purposes I must leave, however, to people who can do something about it. The pertinent question right now is how, within this situation, to establish a Freshman English course which the hundreds of students I told you about earlier can profit by.

Let me begin to answer these questions by putting before you three propositions. The first of these is that Freshman English in a large state university ought to be primarily a service course, but not exclusively so; in a small but very real sense, it is also a "liberal arts" course. The second, which is merely a refinement of the first, is that the aims of the course ought to be limited to giving students practice in writing decently and reading intelligently. I do not use the word "limited" in any ironic sense; there are many educators, many of whom I respect, who believe that the Freshman Course should encompass everything possible contained in the word "communication" or the word "humanities." The third proposition is that the course ought to be relatively standardized, not merely as a matter of administrative convenience but as a matter of principle. Describing these three propositions (which go together to make up what I called, in a moment of pretentiousness, the "eclectic approach") is the burden of the rest of my remarks.

The first proposition speaks of the need for a double concept of the Freshman Course. The terms "service course" and "literature course" are not mutually exclusive, or at any rate need not be. The question is one of emphasis, of doing first things first. Other departments and colleges on the campus, as well as the upper divisions of our own department, give us their students for a year, assuming that we will get them ready to handle themselves language-wise in their major fields. We are obliged to do this, not merely because we are paid to but because the request is educationally wise and proper. We begin by asking freshmen to clean-up their writing. We talk to them about ways to organize and present material they already know or are learning right now. Having talked to them, we insist that they practice again and again what we preach; and we demonstrate to them constantly that the material found in their textbooks and other reading is presented in much the same way as we ask them to present their own. We are not, of course, adverse to their picking up information and new attitudes from the essays we give them to read, but our chief concern with the reading is to show it as a successful demonstration of technique.

Doing all this is a job before us constantly, from the first day of class to the last, but as the term progresses it ought to be possible to shift the emphasis slightly from writing and reading as mechanical skills to writing and reading as the search for and expression of excellence. We are, after all, members of a liberal arts department, and by temperament and training committed to the belief that literature represents the highest activity of the human mind. We need not be ashamed of it. If we will remember that the complex structure of a piece of fiction is likely to be meaningless to a student until he has become aware of the need for organizing his own writing, and

if we will remember to emphasize a piece of literature for what it is essentially, a specimen of excellent expression, instead of as a mere excuse to sermonize students on their lack of culture, we will have the emphasis in the proper place.

The second proposition speaks of the need for a "limited" course. Our aims have to be limited, not merely because we have only some 90 meetings to teach a student to read and write with some skill but because concentration is the real business of the course. The average student comes to us "socialized" and "normalized" until the one thing he needs when he writes—a belief in the validity of his own unique perceptions and experiences—is buried under a ponderous mass of something called "life adjustment values." What he needs, right now, is not more of the same, but practice in treating small facts with respect and handling them with clarity and integrity. Humanities and general education courses are fine, when the student has enough concrete information in his head to suspect that the real world is more complicated than any general concept about it, but as substitutes for the Freshman English course at state universities, I cannot consider such courses seriously. Indeed, I cannot help observing the melancholy fact that the more imperfect the training of an instructor in English the more he feels qualified to teach everything else.

The third proposition speaks of the need for a standardized course. This seems to me obvious. The department itself is a collection of heterogeneous people trying to take a collection of heterogeneous students to the same place at the same time. For one thing, this means a series of standardized tests so that the semi-illiterates can be handled separately, for their own sake as well as for that of other students who need to compete with their equals and their betters. It also means a syllabus, and a fairly rig-

orous one. Instructors teaching the second or third course in Freshman English have a right to expect that the previous course accomplished certain things so that a minimum of backtracking is necessary.

But there are even more valid reasons for a standardized course. It is by no means the only way, but it is a way, through the syllabus, of training young instructors and graduate assistants to teach. It gives them a method, and if the syllabus is a good one, it gives them material. Finally, of course, the standardized syllabus helps all instructors realize the aims of the course.

I have so far told you only that these are to teach students to write decently and read intelligently. To be more specific, I would approach this goal in the following ways: First, a constant demonstration of what good writing is. Most students come to us believing that good writing is a series of high-sounding

statements about large facts and shining abstractions. They need to know that concreteness is a virtue, not only in a poem but in their own papers on "My Home Town." Second, a constant demonstration that language is both a social and a personal instrument, that its flexibility implies *more difficult* standards, not fewer, and certainly not none at all. Third, a constant demonstration of organizational patterns and techniques, from whole papers to sentences. Fourth, constant and guided practice—and this is the keystone of the program—in doing what is talked about in class. Fifth, an increasing emphasis on close reading from journalistic models to relatively complex literature, chiefly to see how meaning is communicated, but incidentally to crack the student's head wide open, so that the slush of immaturity can drain off and leave room for something disciplined and real and individual.

The Communication Course

JEAN MALMSTROM¹

The Communication course sprang out of the demands of the armed services during World War II for faster and more practical instruction in the language arts than was being given by existing courses. Such courses in the language arts, according to the armed services, were unrealistic, ineffective, and too slow. Language, from the armed services' point of view, should be studied as an instrument for communicating ideas in a social system. It should also—and most importantly—be studied as a desperately needed tool for mediation—a tool for mediation at every level of our lives: among individuals, groups, and nations.

There was certainly nothing new in this philosophy. However, to put it into

classroom action, it had to be reformulated in mid-twentieth-century terms, traditional departmental lines often had to be crossed to secure teaching personnel, traditional teaching methods had to be sharpened or new methods invented. The national trend toward general education gave aid and comfort to administrators or teachers who had any initial doubts or fears about the wisdom of such reorganization of courses in the language arts.

Combining instruction in the four obvious skills of communication—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—seemed to be an easy starting point for building such a course. The pattern seemed to require little more perhaps than putting together what was already known about teaching reading, writing, and speaking, and learning quickly how to teach lis-

¹ Western Michigan College of Education, Kalamazoo.

tening. Many such courses are still in operation today. They place emphasis on the techniques of reading, writing, speaking, and listening as ends in themselves. The reading selections are such discrete materials as Whitehead's "Requisites for Social Progress," Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," with James Harvey Robinson's "Kinds of Thinking" inevitably somewhere in the middle. These utterly discrete materials serve simply as exercises on which to practice the skill of reading. Their only other discernible connection with the course is as sources of theme topics on which to practice the skill of writing. Materials for speaking are equally discrete. They range from exposition on how to change a tire to argumentation on lowering the voting age to eighteen. It is easy to find collections of essays suitable for such a course. It is easy to find handbooks which dictate "good" mechanics of writing. It is even easy (I regret to say) to find workbooks which contain horrendous samples of gross misusages of our language. (As if most of our students had not already gathered an equally horrendous selection!) It is easy to find speech texts which explain pitch and rate, the glottis and gestures. In addition to all these easy finds, we also have tests for reading, writing, speaking, and even a few for listening. We can therefore measure what we teach in a skills course. In other words, such a course simply unites under the title "Communication" (or more commonly "Communication Skills" or "Basic Communication") the courses often called "Composition" and "Fundamentals of Speech." With a bow to Lou La Brant, such courses are only old wine in new bottles. Unfortunately, however, what we may measure as taught is often not well learned. This accusation has been levelled against traditional courses for many years, if we may judge by articles in professional journals and by the armed services, demand for a change. Learn-

ing needs motivation and meaning to make it permanent. Otherwise, skill tends to degenerate into mere added fluency and "correctness" for students who already use English fluently and "correctly" when they enter our classrooms, or into a foreign language of the most elusive, evanescent impermanence for those students who come to us speaking their own vulgate.

To deal with these difficulties, that is, to add meaning and motivation to the learning of skills, many Communication courses are organized around a specific body of subject matter. Such courses usually relegate the teaching of skills to separate writing or speech clinics and use class periods for the study of certain areas such as linguistics, semantics, ethics, social psychology, group dynamics. Communication is thought of as a body of knowledge to be understood like the material in a course in chemistry or history. It is impossible to give a universally true definition to the word "communication" as used in such courses because the word means whatever area of subject matter has been selected for study. The choices can be fascinating, and teachers of such courses have a fine and uncommon feeling of having something solid to teach. They have also a temptation to lecture like other subject-matter professors, since they "know" and the students don't. With such wide choice of subject matter, many fresh, intriguing texts can be found. But unless the subject-matter area chosen is linguistics, semantics, or literature, the course would more logically be taught by *bona fide* social scientists than by people in English or speech. In addition, when such subjects as linguistics or semantics are chosen, the teacher is confronted by the difficulty of translating the language of linguists and semanticists so that freshmen can understand it. He is also faced with the difficulty of proving that the subject-matter area is "communication."

Recognizing these dangers and difficulties, a third type of Communication course organizes itself around self-understanding. It assumes that by thoughtful observation of others, students will come to understand themselves better and so will be better able to communicate with others. This basic assumption is of course right, but a little psychiatry is a dangerous thing. Freudian analysis is alluring, but a layman may tamper inane, or worse, disastrously with the students' already complicated personalities. Taught by a skillful teacher well-trained in psychology (How many of us are?) such a course may accomplish great things for some students. Introspection, which is encouraged, is interesting certainly for students who have never tried to observe themselves. Much use can be made of such techniques as personality inventories, group ratings, and autobiography. Ample reading materials are available from the fields of social psychology, semantics, and mental hygiene. However, a teacher of uncommon skill is needed to help students use these materials wisely.

There is one final kind of communication course which aims at avoiding the pitfalls of the other types while incorporating the good points of each. It may be called a course in communication about communication—that is, a course in communication skills, with integrated subject matter, which will probably lay the foundation for self-understanding. The subject matter to be studied is the nature of communication itself: namely, the elements of which it is composed, the instruments which it uses, the processes by which it comes about, the obstacles to its achievement. The classroom is conceived of as a laboratory where students as a social group learn to exchange ideas and experiences by participating in many reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. All of these activities involve the use of language, a set of constantly

changing verbal symbols. The more students understood about language, the course assumes, the more they understand about themselves and about their fellow students, and, by logical extension, about everybody in their environment. Thus, the course meets the first stipulation of the original mandate from the armed services: that language be studied as an instrument for communicating ideas in a social system. Skillfully taught, it may also well meet the armed services' second demand: that language be conceived of as an instrument of mediation among individuals, groups, and nations.

We Americans like to have both practical and idealistic motives for our truly important actions. Students motivated by the obviously practical job-getting value of decent speaking, writing, reading, and listening, plus the idealistic concept of keeping democracy dominant in the world, will learn communication. Actually we need only to guide them, and get out of their way while they learn.

Ideally a course so organized is completely harmonious and rational. It avoids both the superficiality of the course in techniques and the discursiveness of the course in subject matter. However, in developing and organizing such a course pioneering has only begun. A basic difficulty is the necessity that the teacher reorient his traditionally slanted thinking so that he can conceive of the communication skills as somewhat apart from the orthodox techniques of speaking and writing. He must see these skills as requiring evaluation by many utilitarian tests rather than by a single test of conformity to a particular set of generalizations set down in a particular handbook of speaking or writing. Such pragmatic evaluation demands no lowering of our standards, but rather a broadening of them. For instance, we gain by expanding our horizons to include the language problems of the student who,

in order to keep himself in college and support his wife and child at home, must maintain his status as foreman in a factory by telling his men, "Clean them machines." Such a student is made linguistically richer by becoming clearly aware that language is a function of place (as well as of time, sex, age, and many other elements of life) and that therefore language appropriate to the factory may be utterly inappropriate to our college classroom. We want him to maintain and increase his language flexibility so that he may hold his job and thus continue to be our student, so that we too may keep

our jobs.

It seems to me that the bulk of the research which is clearly relevant to such a course is not now being done by persons actively engaged in teaching Communication. Rather it is being done by sociologists, metalinguists, semanticists, psychologists, speech and English professors, and especially businessmen. Apparently these are the persons who are convinced that unless we learn to use our language as a tool for mediation, at every level of our lives, we choose the atomic bomb.

The State-Wide English Program in Tennessee¹

CHARLES F. WEBB²

The State-Wide English Program in Tennessee is sponsored by the Tennessee Council of Teachers of English, an organization which has no political axe to grind and has no organic connection with any college, school, or group of schools in the state. In its membership are teachers from all educational levels from the elementary school through college. It is not restricted in its interests nor is it partial to any college or school in the carrying out of its program. The Council has one great objective: the promotion of any and all programs and projects which will help to improve the quality of English instruction.

The State-Wide Program, originally planned to extend from the first grade to the graduate school, now operates in three distinct divisions: the Language Arts Program for grades 1-8; the English

Program for grades 9-12; and the College Program.

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The program had its beginning in 1942. For approximately fourteen years prior to that time, Professor John C. Hodges, chairman of the Department of English at the University of Tennessee, had studied carefully the records made on freshman English placement tests by graduates of Tennessee high schools entering the University. From his study Professor Hodges realized that even though the quality of English instruction over the state was improving, the high-school graduates who entered college were not as well prepared in English as they were in the other subject-matter fields. Therefore, in January, 1942, he went before a state-wide meeting of principals and superintendents and made a brief but emphatic statement about English instruction in the state. These school officials immediately offered to support any program designed to encourage better work in the English classrooms throughout Tennessee. Consequently, in March, 1942, at its annual meeting, Pro-

¹An address presented at the 1954 meeting of the Kentucky Council of Teachers of English at Louisville, reprinted from the *Kentucky English Bulletin*, Spring, 1955, pp. 7-13, with permission of the author and of the editor, William S. Ward, University of Kentucky.

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Professor Hodges challenged the Tennessee Council of Teachers of English to accept the responsibility of promoting a state-wide English improvement program. The Council accepted the challenge. Thus the State-Wide English Program began. From the beginning it has been directed by a State-Wide Program Committee composed of four officers and five other members, the nine people so chosen as to represent both the various geographical areas of the state and the three educational levels. The one continuing officer is the Secretary, who is expected to furnish the leadership for the program. All other officers and committee members are elected annually. Professor Hodges served as Secretary during the early years; since 1947 the Secretary has been Charles F. Webb, a member of the English staff at the University of Tennessee.

Since the Council did not have, and could not hope to have, adequate funds to finance the program, it was decided that the Council should work through organizations already functioning—the Tennessee Education Association, the State Department of Education, the University of Tennessee, the other colleges (both state and private), and the schools at large. The success which the State-Wide Program has enjoyed must be attributed largely to the whole-hearted cooperation of those organizations, together with that of school people—teachers and officials alike—throughout the state.

ANNUAL REPORT TO HIGH SCHOOLS

The first project of the State-Wide Program was a report to the high schools. The mechanics of this report (still being made annually) are simple. Since practically all of the more than thirty colleges of the state regularly give English placement tests to entering freshmen, the colleges (of which about twenty-five participate) are asked each fall to send their test results to the Secretary of the Council. After all out-of-state students have

been eliminated from the lists, the reports are pooled and then sorted according to counties, systems, and individual schools. Reports are mailed to approximately 1,000 high-school teachers of senior English and about 400 principals. In these reports detailed but confidential information is given to each school as to the record made on an English placement test by its graduates who entered Tennessee colleges. Each of 103 superintendents—in 95 counties and 7 cities—receives a summary statement for the schools under his supervision.

The colleges are at liberty to use any recognized standard English test. Four or five of the better known tests are usually represented in the reports. Since the raw or scaled scores on any one test are not equivalent to those on any other, all scores are converted to percentiles. The individual student is ranked, therefore, only in relation to the other students in his particular college.

Averages are made for each high school; thus a given high school can compare its averages with national norms and determine with reasonable accuracy the quality of instruction which it has given its graduates, provided, of course, that enough people enter Tennessee colleges to give a fair sampling of the graduating class as a whole.

Both teachers and principals find the reports helpful and stimulating. Faculty meetings are held in order to discuss them and compare the school's standing with that of previous years. Often the reports furnish the motivation for a critical examination—and subsequent revision—of a school's English course of study. Because there is no basis for comparison between colleges and because the reports are so useful to the schools, most of the colleges of the state participate in the project.

THE ENGLISH MANUAL, GRADES 9-12

After two annual reports had been made, many high-school English teach-

ers began to take stock of their own teaching and to seek help in improving it. The reports had revealed also a number of outstanding teachers who, to quote Professor Hodges, stood out "like mountain peaks over the state." These teachers had demonstrated that they knew what should go into a sound English program; consequently representatives of the Tennessee Council visited their classrooms, observed their procedures, and talked with them about their courses of study. Out of this study came the beginnings of the *English Manual*.

The *Manual* presents suggestive material for grades 9-12, and there is a separate section for each of the four years of high-school work. In it are presented units of work in grammar and literature, oral English, composition, and use of the library. There is a suggested daily schedule for a complete year's work for each high-school grade. In addition, there are units on spelling, suggested reading lists for each grade, and a professional bibliography. With the exception of some of the units on speech and the use of the library, all of the material in the *Manual* came directly from the classrooms of approximately fifty outstandingly successful teachers scattered throughout the state. Thus the *Manual* made it possible for these better teachers to share their methods and experiences with others.

The Tennessee Council sponsored the *Manual*; the State-Wide English Program Committee collected and edited the material; the State Department of Education published it in 1946. Recently it has gone out of print, but teachers have found it so useful that plans for a revised edition are under way.

THE LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM, GRADES 1-8

The Language Arts Program for grades 1-8 was actively begun in 1947. Because of the nature of the organization of elementary schools, the State-Wide Committee thought it wise to work through the county and city supervisors

of elementary work. These supervisors were asked to appoint study groups of classroom teachers so that a careful examination of the weaknesses and needs in the field of Language Arts might be made. Out of the study came evidence of several weaknesses, and heading the list were spelling and vocabulary. The year following the preliminary study, supervisors were asked to continue their group activity and to make a specific study of methods and classroom activities for improving the teaching of vocabulary. They were also asked to place greater stress on word study in all schools under their supervision.

It was the hope of the State-Wide English Committee that the program would grow from this study-group activity and that each year some specific problem could be studied intensively. But the response was disappointing and areas of cooperation over the state were spotty. It was decided, therefore, to devise a new approach. The first approach, it should be pointed out, failed not because of lack of interest or an unwillingness to cooperate but because the average elementary teacher and supervisor are already heavily loaded with responsibilities in workshops and other "in-service" activities. At present the State Department of Education is sponsoring a long-term program of curriculum study and course of study revision in all subject-matter areas. All facilities in all schools of the state are actively participating in the state-promoted program. The Council, of course, does not compete with such a program. Instead, it is cooperating in every way possible.

THE COLLEGE ENGLISH PROGRAM

The College English Program began with the holding of the first Tennessee College English Conference in 1947. At the two-day conference work groups examined and discussed problems incident to the following subjects: Freshman English, Sophomore English, Advanced and

Graduate Courses, Speech and Drama, and the Training and Certification of Teachers of English. A complete report of the discussions and recommendations was prepared by an editorial committee and placed in the hands of all college presidents and deans in the state. These recommendations—and especially those relating to Freshman English—enabled the English instructors and heads of departments in several of the colleges to convince their administrators that teaching loads should be lightened and the number of students in English classes reduced. One college noted a distinct drop in the number of failures in Freshman English after the sections had been reduced from 35 or more per section to 20-25 per section.

A second College Conference was held in September, 1951. An attempt was made to identify and evaluate the results of the first Conference, after which discussion sessions were held in the same general areas that were studied in 1947. A third Conference will probably be held in September, 1955.¹

LOCAL ENGLISH COUNCILS

The State-Wide English Program Committee believes that better teaching will be done on all grade levels if teachers can see beyond their own grades and become more sympathetic with the objectives and problems of teachers on other levels. Therefore during the past four years the Council has urged the organization of local (city or county) English councils where teachers of all grades may come to know one another better, discuss their common problems, and build a more definitely coordinated program. A dozen such councils are functioning successfully in various parts of the state. The idea, however, has not spread as rapidly as was expected largely because teachers already have connections with established organizations.

¹ Conflicting engagements of key participants caused postponement until Summer, 1956.

AREA CONFERENCES

Careful study and experiment have shown that a more pressing need exists for area English conferences. Thus far four such meetings have been held with great success on state college campuses. During the school year of 1954-55 the Council expects to sponsor at least ten such conferences, and eventually about fifteen.

The plan is simple. The conferences, held on Saturdays, are jointly sponsored by the Tennessee Council and the host college. College campuses are used for two principal reasons: classrooms or small auditoriums are available for the meetings, and the school cafeteria provides an opportunity for the group to have lunch together and thus get better acquainted. Two sessions (morning and afternoon) are held, at which high-school teachers from the local areas serve as discussion leaders. An agenda of topics for discussion, based on suggestions sent in by those who expect to attend, is mimeographed and distributed.

These area conferences are designed to meet a definite need expressed again and again to the Secretary by classroom teachers. State or sectional meetings bring addresses—worthwhile, of course—but the teachers want and need informal meetings of small groups where those present feel that they can talk freely and can attempt to solve the practical, everyday problems that are so very real and important to them.

THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

The actual promotion of the State-Wide Program is done through personal visits of the Secretary to local councils, area conferences, and individual schools throughout the state. Because the University of Tennessee is very much interested in rendering service to the state at large, the Secretary of the Council is excused from teaching duties during the winter quarter (and frequently during the spring quarter also) in order that he

may be free to visit schools, answer calls to work with special groups as a consultant, speak to teachers groups, and do anything he feels will help to promote the cause of better English teaching in Tennessee. In his visits to schools the Secretary sits in classes, discusses programs of study or teaching problems with teachers individually and in small groups. (It is our feeling that much can be gained from discussing problems with teachers *in their own school* rather than in some conference or meeting held across the state from the field in which the teachers actually work). Sometimes the secretary assists local English staffs to revise courses of study. Often he is able to pass on to a teacher who feels she has gone stale in her classroom fresh

ideas and activities to help vitalize her teaching—ideas which he probably has seen in use recently in some other classroom. The secretary, in short, is a clearing house for methods and class activities; he is a booster of morale.

There are many disappointments and problems in the promotion of a statewide English program, but the members of the State-Wide Committee and the Secretary are optimistic about the future of the Tennessee program. There is now little evidence of the treadmill aimlessness that once characterized many English classrooms. Teachers are alert and sensitive to new ways of improving their teaching; they are earnest in their efforts; they are enthusiastic about the job they are doing.

Metaphor and Exposition

HARRY R. GARVIN¹

It is rash but pedagogically feasible to assume that students who have passed the first semester of freshman English have learned the decencies, the minimum fundamentals for acceptable writing. If in subsequent courses in "advanced" composition the instructor decides each time to do first things first and to deal only near the end of the course with metaphor, description, and diction, he is unwittingly abdicating his role of rhetorician, the teacher of vivid writing. Some instructors have abdicated plaintively. Yet every teacher and every rhetor will profess that metaphor and other subtleties of description make even expository and argumentative writing lively.

Most instructors will probably agree that the importance of sprightly diction can best be dramatized while the class is studying the techniques of description. But unless these techniques are developed very early in the course, there

will remain too few expository themes in which the student can practice his temporarily won techniques; and there will be almost no resulting transfer of niceties to his writing in any other course, or perhaps anywhere else. Such a student will henceforth consider metaphor not as something integral to exposition and indeed to just about all good writing but rather as an ornament to adorn a theme.

Once while I was reading some term papers at the end of a plaintive course in advanced exposition, a host of barren sentences mildly stultified me and at last put me to dreamful, uncomfortable sleep. The next day I decided that in my next course in advanced exposition I would begin with the techniques of description.

After the normal preliminaries in a first meeting of a class, I read from my file two student specimens of description, filled with clusters of dead and shrieking metaphor. Then we discussed

¹ Bucknell University

briefly some good specimens, again from my student file; and I assigned for the next meeting some sections of a chapter on descriptions, and a descriptive paper (with or without a narrative base) for two meetings ahead. Untypically, I was ready to return the set of papers at the following meeting; and we discussed one of the good papers and one of the bad, together with exciting and enervating excerpts from many others. We were now ready, I felt, carefully to analyze some subtleties in good description.

For seven additional hour-meetings we proceeded to analyze, in more or less traditional fashion, the techniques in description. In the order our inclinations or necessity suggested, we covered such problems as dominant impression and tone; pattern and selection; metaphor and symbol in prose and poetry; figurative language in describing objects, persons, and states of mind and of feeling; and diction. Imitations of model sentences and short passages were written, in addition to two descriptive papers.

We analyzed the technical problems

primarily, but not exclusively, in relation to the descriptive themes the students were writing. Our major design was not to develop into masters of description or into connoisseurs of fine description but rather to transfer the niceties of description to other forms of discourse and to feel the need for independent insights and for individual ways of expressing them.

For the rest of the semester I called special attention in every paper (including the process theme) to vivid and dead metaphor, and above all to warmed-over and fresh diction. The decencies were left to individual conferences mainly—just as in previous courses the subtleties of description and style had been left largely to the conference—but were always sufficiently stressed.

With slight variations, I have since used the above approach in all my sections of advanced composition—including those for second-semester freshmen. The inevitable spans of stultification have of late been broken much more often by the phrases that cheer but not inebriate.

Composition and the Course in English for Foreign Students

WILLIAM F. MARQUARDT¹

The college teacher of English for foreign students, recognizing his obligation to get his charges to write as nearly like angels in as short a time as possible, and turning to those who have studied the problem before him, will be struck by what seems to be a sharp decline in interest in that problem in the past decade. He will find first of all that whereas the three analytical bibliographies on modern language teaching covering the years 1927-1942, edited by Professor Algernon Coleman, list numerous

titles under the heading "Composition," the more recent annual bibliographies in the *Modern Language Journal* list very few titles containing the word or suggesting an interest in the subject. He will note further that in the recently published volume of articles culled from *Language Learning*, the new periodical devoted to applying the results of linguistic research to language teaching, there is not one article on the teaching of composition or even suggesting that it merits attention. He will note still further that the thick volume, *Twentieth*

¹ University of Washington

Century Modern Language Teaching, published in 1948 for the purpose of bringing together important modern writings on language teaching reflects an almost equal lack of interest in composition as a teaching device.

Finally, if he turns to Robert Lado's *Annotated Bibliography for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language*, issued in the spring of 1955 by the U. S. Office of Education, for items of specific interest to him, he finds that although interest in the potentialities of composition in English language teaching is not completely dead, it is being kept alive by a relatively few persistent individuals—these mainly on the other side of the Atlantic and contributing to the periodical *English Language Teaching*.

Why this curious falling off of interest in composition at a time when written communication between the different peoples is increasing by leaps and bounds? A partial answer at least to this question can easily be found. Antedating this decline in interest in composition as a language teaching device so immediately as to suggest that it might be a cause is the increasing attention in the late thirties to the doctrine of the scientific linguists, so clearly enunciated by Leonard Bloomfield in his *Language* (1933) and later more concretely in his *Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages* (1942), that written language is derivative and that hence spoken language must take precedence over written in teaching as well as in linguistic analysis. This doctrine became the rationale of the extensive wartime speed-up language programs. Their dramatic success in achieving certain limited objectives led people in general to believe that the golden highway to quick mastery of a foreign language lay in replacing the reading, writing, and translation approach with the aural-oral approach.

Outside the U. S., however, where tra-

dition had a stronger hold, where language learning through reading and imitating literary models had long been considered an intellectual discipline valuable for its own sake, and where for centuries scholars had written tomes in languages living only in books, the aural-oral approach found slow acceptance. In English language teaching abroad especially it was too slow and indirect a method for the multitudes who, because of the increasing importance of English in politics, business, science, and technology, had to learn above all to read and write it in order to succeed in their fields.

Anyone who has taught English abroad will attest to the fact that interest in learning to write it is especially powerful today. How many hundreds of hours have I spent in Japan revising letters, both business and personal, advertising copy, notices, journal articles in such diverse fields as biochemistry, psychology, medicine, and fish ecology, and even books. The style of the manuscripts ranged from almost unintelligible to clear and forceful, but the authors themselves were almost uniformly clumsy in speaking English.

If the need to be able to write English effectively is urgent for the average Japanese living among his own people, how much more so must it be when he becomes a student in an American university. True, his first frustrations come from his awkwardness in speaking and listening, but he soon works out a *modus vivendi* and sometimes even recognizes that his curious speech is a social asset rather than a liability if only he utters it with gusto, good-humor, and self-abandonment. But how far will these virtues get him with his economics or geography instructor reading his quizzes, reports, and term papers, or, if he is a graduate student, with his associates or professors plowing through his research papers, seminar papers, or thesis?

The teacher of English to foreigners, either in this country or abroad, who has made composition the central part of the course will testify to the earnestness with which his students tackle the assignments. The absence of late themes and the careful revisions on the returned themes are sure to bring gladness to his heart if he has lived the life of quiet desperation that is the lot of the average freshman composition teacher.

With need and interest, then, strong arguments for making composition central in the university course in English for foreign students, what can we say in answer to the doctrine that the quickest way to learn either to speak or to write a foreign language is to gain oral-aural mastery of it? The answer need not be alienating. To turn our backs on more than ten years of painstaking research demonstrating the effectiveness of the aural-oral approach in teaching English to foreigners would hardly be wisdom. There need be no incompatibility between giving a student a solid foundation in the phonemic, intonation, stress, and usage patterns of English and a start in writing it as well. Indeed, the stimulus of being called upon to express himself in his best and most carefully organized thought may well be the incentive he needs for seeing through the frequently monotonous though indispensable oral drill.

It may be argued, however, that with class time and the instructor's time already inadequate to satisfy the most urgent needs of the student, it is not practical to make composition, the proper teaching of which requires much time, a central part of the course. The reply to this argument is that composition can be used to bring out the student's most firmly rooted misconceptions about English and at the same to give him valuable aural-oral training. Furthermore, once the student has been sufficiently challenged to express himself at his best

the pattern drill can be taken out of the classroom and relegated to the mechanical apparatuses which have become indispensable in modern language teaching and which are always at the student's beck and call.

Let me illustrate briefly by pointing out what we do at the University of Washington. English for Foreign Students is a three-credit course meeting for one hour on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In this limited time we try to give the student training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing and some grasp of structure and usage. Obviously it would be impossible to accomplish all these objectives in three hours a week of class time plus the limited time available for individual conferences. But with the help of a tape-recorder and a hectograph machine we manage to go far toward the attainment of our objectives. The materials of the course are a usage patterns manual with a minimum of grammatical explanation and a maximum of drill exercises, a pronunciation manual with much drill material, and a collection of readings selected and arranged for foreign readers. Approximately one hour of class time a week, generally on Monday, is devoted to the material in the pronunciation and usage manuals and to supplementary drill based on weaknesses revealed in the compositions. No attempt is made to cover the exercises in the manuals in class. They have all been worked out and recorded on tape and each student is required to spend at least three hours a week listening to them in a special room equipped with a tape recorder and plenty of tapes. Time spent in class on this material is devoted to clearing up matters of usage, pronunciation, and intonation troubling the student and administering whatever supplementary drills seem necessary.

The second period is devoted to composition and it is the high point of the week. The students are made to feel that

the usage session on Monday and the reading discussion on Fridays are merely adjuncts to it.

At the beginning of the quarter the members of the class are asked to submit a list of ten topics to serve as subjects for the themes due each Wednesday. The only limitations imposed are that the topics be narrow enough in scope to be manageable in three to five hundred words. The list is discussed with each student in conference and the overly vague and broad topics are given a focus. A simple lecture at the beginning of the quarter on such essentials of composition as unity, coherence, and organization seems worth giving—if comparing the themes of a quarter in which such a lecture was given with one in which none was given is any criterion.

The students are told to prepare the themes for effective oral presentation and to practice reading them aloud in the light of what they have learned from their pronunciation manual regarding pronunciation, word and sentence stress, and intonation.

On Wednesday the tape recorder is brought to class. Three or four students whose turn it is read their papers. During the reading no correcting voice interrupts the student. Recording the reading permits the instructor to defer that chore until after the student has finished.

In the play-back the instructor stops the machine whenever something awkward in usage, diction, or pronunciation appears. He then makes the necessary correction and explanation, plays back the faulty expression, repeats his correct version, and has the student repeat it after him until he has mastered it.

A variation of this practice is to have the students, who are scheduled to read, type their themes on hectograph master-sheets for duplication and distribution to the class. The instructor then writes in his corrections on the master sheet so

that they appear on the duplicated copies as a graphic highlighting of the corrections he later makes in his play-back.

Another type of composition exercise which can be correlated with aural-oral training and which is especially suitable for students who have trouble doing free composition is for the instructor to read to the students a short essay of general interest and simple vocabulary slowly enough for them to take notes but not to copy verbatim. Then they are asked to write from memory or notes as graceful a theme as possible. The next period the instructor rereads the essay while the students check their versions against his reading. This exercise never fails to bring forth a flood of questions concerning points of difference between the language of the students and that of the original.

The efficacy of the techniques I have outlined for teaching foreign students to write English has not been proved by rigorous scientific tests. They are no sure cure for either the ills of the student or the teacher. Many of the papers I turn back at the end of the term are still a symphony in red and black. But the evidence that progress has been made is convincing. The almost unintelligible themes of the beginning of the quarter have given way to those with a clear thread of sense. The merely clumsily written ones have become more idiomatic and closer to speech in rhythm. And not at all infrequently they contain passages like the following of fresh, artless charm which lighten the heart of the weary teacher surfeited with the clichés and hand-me-down expressions that fill the themes of the average American student:

"Good-bye, dear Father, Mother, and Japan, I murmured under my breath. I could see my father's lips moving, but everybody was so noisy that I could not hear what he said. People on the wharf, houses near the port and everything be-

came smaller and dimmer because of the distance and tears. Then tears too big to be kept in my eyes rolled down my cheeks."

Compile a Dictionary

ROBERT L. COARD¹

"And your assignment for next week is to compile a dictionary." My class in freshman composition eyes me apprehensively when I make this announcement, but, of course, after the necessary explanations and qualifications it turns out to be less dreadful than it sounds. Instead of merely reading a chapter on the use of the dictionary and doing one or two mechanical exercises, the student combines the reading with his own little experiment in dictionary making. It won't do him any harm to play at being Noah Webster, Joseph Worcester, H. L. Mencken, or Eric Partridge for a few days.

The germinal idea for this assignment originated in Porter Perrin's *Writer's Guide and Index to English* in which he calls attention to the numerous vocabulary additions like *conflict*, *honors*, and *prelims* that a student picks up by attending college without studying any specific subject. Let the student make a survey of these general college words in the same way the lexicographer goes about his task. Of course, since the student is a student, it is wise to set a minimum number of words in context that he must gather and then classify, label, and define for a satisfactory fulfillment of the assignment.

By reading the school newspaper, the college catalog, and other publications of this kind and by listening to talk in the college union, the residence halls, and the classroom, he can compile a number of examples showing use of words in actual situations, apart from which they have no real meaning but only a poten-

tial one. This collecting of words in use will provide an insight into the approach of the professional linguist.

Other benefits flow from the assignment. For one thing the bulk of these general college words will not be treated in any dictionary the student can get his hands on so that he will be forced to rely on his own powers of observation, deduction, and composition. The discovery that great quantities of words exist and are continuing to come into existence without being considered general enough in scope or proper enough or permanent enough for inclusion in dictionaries is a discovery worth making. The time lag that exists between the language of today and that recorded in dictionaries will also become apparent. In addition the student is likely to find that one dictionary will think an informal college word warrants definition while another will not. The *Webster New World Dictionary*, which includes words like *falsies* and *fanny*, is more liberal in accepting slang and colloquialisms than *Webster's New Collegiate*. It's illuminating for students to learn that dictionaries aren't a drably uniform lot but possess a kind of personality like other productions of mankind.

The student collector of general college words in use will find many lively examples in conversation. After all, as the experts tell us, language is primarily a spoken thing, and observation of actual speech should be encouraged in the classroom. Have the student gather particular instances: "That housemother is nosy," "She was campused for two weeks," "How's your love buggy doing?" "We had a drop test in ab psych," "That

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was some snow job the dean gave us," and the like.

Words employed in conversation are fleeting and elusive, but those used in the college newspaper, another rich source, may be studied at leisure. *Snap course, grind, cram, coke date, practice teach, gridder, prexy, J. V.'s, alums, varsity, homecoming, post session, and Greek* are but a few that may be gathered. The fraternities and sororities alone have created an extensive vocabulary: *pin, barb, frat, rush, rushee, active, pledge, sponsor, patron, hell week, help week, dry the ink*, and dozens more.

The college catalog will provide formal words, such as *humanities, communication, general education, hours, grade points, student load, transcripts, and deficiency report*. The catalog is a good place too to go hunting for college euphemisms. Does your college separate students from the institution or just expel them?

Schools in different parts of the country, it will be found, have their own special words created by local and state conditions. These are especially worth study since the work calls for some original observation. In North Dakota, for example, students in the education program are frequently referred to as *rurals, standards*, and *degrees* depending on the kind of teaching certificates they are working for: rurals are those in the one-year curriculum for teachers in country schools; standards, those in the two-year curriculum for city grade schools; and degrees, those in the four-year program.

After recording varying uses of the same word in sentences, the student should try to classify his words into the appropriate parts of speech, number and distinguish the different meanings if there are more than one, supply the words with any necessary usage label, and then try to define them just as is done in dictionaries. The attempt to sort words into different parts of speech will

enable the teacher to point out some of the advantages of such a classification and some of its baffling shortcomings. This is an opportune time too to comment on the ease with which words shift in English from one part of speech to another if a functional classification is made. The necessity of deciding whether a given word requires a usage label should bring about animated discussion. Is *panty raid*, for example, becoming obsolescent?

Perhaps the standard classroom exercise of trying to define common things in a few well-selected words is here made more meaningful by becoming part of a larger pattern. By listing specialized meanings for such familiar words as *quarter* and *hour*, the student becomes aware of the large number of meanings such a word may accumulate. I find it amusing to have students in schools organized on the quarter system attempt a definition of *off hour*. Though apparently they pick up the meaning of this term on the first day of school, they have great difficulty in phrasing a satisfactory definition.

These general college words will richly illustrate all kinds of linguistic twists and turns and may hold the student's interest during such discussion because of the close relation of the material to his life. The building of words by suffixes and analogy may be seen in *practice-teach* and *practice-teacher* and in *sack hound, rack hound, chow hound, and grade hound*. *Brunch*, a favorite of college bulletin boards, is a good blend word. The formation of new words by clipping is so common in the college vocabulary that it may almost be considered an identifying mark. Clippings range from the familiar *prof* and *gym* to more exotic coinages like *sosh* and *poly sci*. In illustrating figurative language, one again finds that examples abound. Somehow *bonehead English* is the first to come to mind. Radiation of meaning,

that fascinating linguistic change that yields us teas without tea and coke dates without coke, may also be remarked.

No doubt the majority of papers turned in will show that class members have only a hazy idea of how definitions should be phrased and what usage labels, if any, are appropriate. Neverthe-

less, the effort to make the student examine language with his own eyes and ears is not likely to be entirely fruitless. With luck he may develop a curiosity about words and their perplexing ways and a desire to observe their workings further, an attitude worth acquiring early in a lifetime in which words are destined to play an important part.

The Place of Literature in the Freshman Course¹

Imaginative Literature Is Indispensable

WAYNE C. BOOTH²

If someone who had never taught a Freshman English course happened to stray among us today, he might easily be misled by our topic. "The Place of Literature in the Freshman Course" might suggest to such a benighted soul that there is such a thing as *the* Freshman Course and that we have some hope of discovering *the* place for imaginative literature in it. All of *us* know better, certainly, but even so it may be well to begin with the reminder that we are likely to mean very different things when we talk about our various courses which fill the requirement for Freshmen; what's more, we probably do not think of the same victim when we use the word Freshman. How literature will be used in any writing course must always depend on whether the students enter, as a very few of our students now enter, already interested in literature, or whether they enter feeling that what they call "English"—almost without knowing that they are including literature—is a curse and an abomination. It will also depend on the kind of college that surrounds the course, either supporting or submerging it. And having gone this far in relativity,

I might as well go further and repeat, in all sincerity, the truism that in a sense everything depends on the teacher.

But having admitted all this, one can still claim that properly chosen imaginative literature produces results in the thinking, speaking, and writing of the majority of students that nothing else can produce so well. As a stimulus for thinking and writing, as a source of subject matter, and as a model for style and grammar, imaginative literature is, as the students say, the best thing with which they can come in contact. Some of us, it is true, are fortunate enough to teach composition to students who are at the same time taking a literature or philosophy course. But most of us are not; whatever experience our Freshmen are to have of novels, plays, or poems will come through us.

Before going further, however, I must admit that there are great dangers inherent in any attempt to use imaginative literature in a composition course. In the first place, teachers and students are likely to forget that learning to appreciate literature is not a substitute for learning how to write. Learning to write can be, in some of its aspects, such hard work, and reading some kinds of literature can be, or seem to be, so easy, that the student may very easily become confused

¹ Under this topic the following four papers were presented at the First General Session, Wright Thomas, chairman, of the 1955 Spring Meeting, Hotel Morrison, Chicago, March 24.

² Earlham College

about what he is doing and about what he should be doing. A student once said to me, "In high school we read mostly humorous essays and short stories; at first I didn't do so well on my papers, but once I found out that by writing a silly short story I could get a good grade, I just went on being silly in paper after paper throughout the year. I never once wrote a serious paper in which I tried to present an idea." This student really had a fine gift for comic narrative, but he was thoroughly confused because his teacher had pretended that he was learning composition.

On the other hand, there is grave danger, in using novels, plays, and poems as a source for ideas and as a means of motivation for writing about ideas, that students will be led into the error of mistaking the literary method of dealing with ideas for the chief or only method. To pretend that in raiding, as it were, novels, plays, and poems for ideas which can then be used by students in writing their own themes, we are obviating the need for teaching philosophy or political science or rhetoric, is to leave our students half-educated, at best. Indeed, I would say that no composition course can afford to use novels, plays, or poems at *all* unless it includes also at least a few works which treat speculatively and systematically the ideas which the poetic works embody imaginatively and for the most part unsystematically.

But even admitting these dangers, and the need to take steps to counteract them, I still believe that imaginative literature is indispensable. Only if our entering students were already deeply interested in improving their writing, only if they knew how to read complicated expository and imaginative prose, could we dispense with the value of literature as a vehicle, as a tool. Only if our students came to us as we now hope they will leave us—ready for an *advanced* composition course—could we be justified in

giving them what might be called the exclusively direct treatment. In short, I am ready to risk the danger, which is great, of reducing literature to the ideas it contains, and the equal danger of thinking that imaginative literature can take the place of speculative writing, in order to avoid the greater danger of producing sophomores who will never voluntarily read a book or write a paper, who know how to produce a passably organized theme when it is required of them but who don't really know why it is ever required.

I became aware of the dangers inherent in using imaginative literature for motivation and for a supply of ideas very early in my teaching experience, and it was only with difficulty that I came to admit to myself that the advantages outweigh the potential harm. What convinced me was my experience with what was perhaps extravagantly called an *experimental* Freshman course at Haverford College. This course, originally financed by the Carnegie Corporation, was called unblushingly "Reading and Writing on Human Values," and it was built, with equal frankness, around an explicit set of important issues or problems found in complete novels, plays, poems, and biographies. As a matter of fact, there was no overt admission to its being a composition or communications course at all. There were two class sessions each week, at which ideas and issues were discussed—ideas which were usually extracted gently, but sometimes brutally, from the complete works; each student then wrote a paper each week which was read aloud and criticized in a tutorial session with the instructor and two other students. Approximately one month was spent on each set of related problems or issues; usually two works, one modern and the other classical, were read during this time, so that on each set of problems, such as "Personal Success," or "Social Justice," the students

wrote four papers.

The course was unquestionably a success from every point of view. At the end of the second year, for example, the students themselves voted it overwhelmingly their most popular course: more than fifty percent of the Freshman class liked it better than any other course, and 98% of them rated it third or better. The teachers themselves were and are even more enthusiastic. The English and Philosophy departments noted an almost immediate improvement in the quality of majors. The administration liked the general effect on the college so well that it continued to finance the program after foundation funds ran out, although it was approximately twice as expensive as the usual course. And objective tests, in so far as they were possible, supported everyone's feeling that the Freshman course had been redeemed.

It is difficult to decide, of course, how much of the success depends on the tutorial style of teaching and how much on the use of complete literary works. I believe that both are important and that each has value independent of its relationship, in this particular experiment, with the other. I know that for myself the experience of working with the small tutorial groups, analyzing from one to three papers each week, convinced me as I had not been convinced before of the students' capacity to help each other more effectively, under proper conditions, than the instructor can help them.

But I am also convinced that the method of using complete literary works was an essential part of the success of the course. It could have been, I am sure, disastrous. If we had given the students *nothing but* imaginative literature, in a conventional course-structure without tutorials, I am sure that the writing would have suffered; with all the class time spent on ideas, and with most of the ideas clothed in literary rather than speculative dress, a course could hardly

expect to produce students who could write well on speculative subjects. But in the first place, we were careful to include one or two speculative or expository works each semester, such as Schweitzer's *Out of My Life and Thought*, Plato's *Republic*, or More's *Utopia*. Thus the imaginative presentation, say, of man's predicament by Malraux in *Man's Fate* could be compared with the direct speculative treatment of similar problems. We found, as we had predicted, that the students were almost invariably more interested in the issue of freedom, say, when it was encountered in an imaginative work like *The Brothers Karamazov* than when they met it initially in a work like Mill's *On Liberty*. They were, for another example, almost invariably more stimulated by the narrative portions of Schweitzer's Autobiography than by the speculative interpolations of musical theory, or the history of Christian scholarship. The stimulation could, with a little ingenuity, be carried over to more direct works on the same ideas sufficiently so that few if any students came away from the course thinking, as so many Americans today seem to think, that the only way to deal with an idea is to write a novel about it. If it had not been for the weekly tutorials, however, I rather think that this balance would have been unattainable without including a larger portion of directly philosophical and rhetorical works in the reading list.

Because it was in the tutorials that the real transition from imaginative apprehension of a new set of problems to the intellectual apprehension of possible modes of solution and expression was made. I would not pretend, of course, that the discussions were always profound, or that in writing their papers the students never floundered in waters too deep for them. But when they did, there were always two other students and an instructor nearby to drag them out. There is, after all, far less to be feared from the

student who goes in over his head than from the student who never even knows the temptation to try the water.

I began today by admitting two dangers in what opponents might call the "sugar-coating" school of rhetoric: students may pick up a reduced version of ideas and they may pick up a non-literary approach to literature. I will end by admitting that even with all our precautions against both dangers, I would certainly want to see the students who complete such a course go on to take courses in philosophy and literature. The student who has become excited about reading and writing, and about discussing ideas on a serious level can easily learn, in a philosophy course, that his Freshman ideas are not the last word. The student who has become excited about reading and writing and discussion of literary values can easily learn, in a literature course, that literature is more than the ideas it contains. Even for the student who will never go on in formal education, I think the chances for self-correction through further reading and writing are obviously greater, if he has learned to think of himself as someone who is interested in reading and writing than if he has become convinced that this stuff is not for him, or that reading and writing are merely tools to academic and ultimately business or social success.

I would be the last to claim that there are no other methods of motivating students. It is clear that for most of us, without the advantages of the tutorial sessions as a weekly check on distortions or

excesses, with only a few minutes to pen halfway unintelligible commentaries on the students' papers, and with students less well prepared when they come to us, to use as much literature as is used in the Haverford course will not do. We must have handbooks and essay collections; to paraphrase E. M. Forster on plot, alas, we must have handbooks and essay collections. But we cannot afford to leave any of our students with the notion that Handbooks and Essay collections are the elements of what they think of as English. Whenever I tell non-academic acquaintances that I teach English, I know what to expect: a groan or an embarrassed laugh and the statement, "I never was much good at English." When pressed, such people usually reveal that they are remembering a course almost totally devoid of literature, a course in which what little literature was read was either divorced from the writing program or taught from a belletristic point of view suitable only for committed English majors—that is, for those already able and willing to read and write. It is true that selling people on English is not our only task, and whether they have been sold is not our only test of success. We succeed only if our students learn to write and read well enough to be able to continue and to want to continue to read and write. But literature as a vehicle of ideas and issues in Freshman English is indispensable wherever students do not encounter in other courses the intellectual stimulation that only literature can provide.

Literature: The Freshman's Key

GERALD THORSON¹

They say that the hardest thing about roller skating is the floor—when you come right down to it. I suppose that the hardest thing about speaking is finding a sub-

ject, a common topic on which we can all communicate and participate. Yet, as teachers of English, we seem to have no difficulty along that line, for when all else fails, when all conversation has

¹ Augsburg College.

ceased, we can always break the painful pause with only a casual mention of the freshman course. For this perennial delinquent, like the poor, we always have with us. Too often, however, we act like the proverbial mother-in-law—over-solicitous, demanding, quick to advise—and let our own interests stand in the way of a successful solution to the problems of the course. ("... and I do decidedly like to like my own interest in what I am doing," said Gertrude Stein.²) The result is much like that of an international essay contest once held. Each nation was asked to contribute one essay on the assigned topic: elephants. The essays came in. Great Britain sent its contribution: "The British Navy in the Transportation of the Elephant." From Sweden came "The Elephant during the Reign of Gustavus Adolphus." France's essay, brief and to the point, was "The Love Life of the Elephant." Germany's scholarly work was entitled "An Analysis of the Proboscis of the Elephant," in three volumes and two supplements, complete with footnotes and cross references. The contribution of the United States was "How to Produce Bigger and Better Elephants." And Norway's essay was entitled, simply and honestly, "Norway and the German Occupation." We, too, as English teachers—given the task of analyzing and discussing the freshman course—frequently respond in the same way.

But we do have a concern for the freshman course. The success of this conference and its popularity during the past years alone attest to it. Our task is not a simple one, and we are concerned with doing the job well. Of course, we all know from experience that the student coming to us in the freshman course can neither read nor write; and, what is worse, he doesn't care. In fact, it often seems to us that he comes to college with no training at all, neither in reading nor

writing, that he has never been motivated, and that he lacks all interest in English. But it is simply not true that he has learned nothing in high school. And he is not the dullard that we sometimes assume he is. He may not be able to spell, he may not always write a good sentence, and he certainly cannot always organize a coherent paragraph. He not only has not read the novels of Jane Austen and George Eliot, but he perhaps has not even heard of them. But he is educable, as Mrs. Carrie Stanley so delightfully pointed out at this conference six years ago.³ And he is worthy of our best interests.

What we must do, we say, is to make the freshman course student-centered: we must get down to the student's level and begin there. And what do we find? He can write an acceptable letter applying for a position in a bank, for that he has been taught; but when he writes a letter of request to the admissions and scholarship committee that he be excused from the graduation requirement in foreign languages because his physical education major is so demanding, he forgets the first principles of good letter writing. He can make an admirable showing on a panel discussion, for he has had much practice in his common-learning courses in speaking freely and glibly about the most complex contemporary problems; but he can neither make a proper analysis of a problem nor evaluate it. He lives in a world of mass media: television, radio, motion pictures, newspapers, magazines, and comic books are as familiar to him as *McGuffey's Reader* was to the occupant of the little red schoolhouse. And so we begin, not with the *Reader*, but with mass media. We give the student a steady diet of news stories, editorials, and magazine articles; and somehow we never get beyond that.

² Lectures in America (Random House, Inc.), p. 219.

³ Report of The Conference on College Freshman Courses in Composition and Communication (April 1-2, 1949), pp. 72-76.

The student finishes the course—a little more glib, a little more facile; but his is still a world of mass media and applied science. We have successfully organized the course on the basis of communication skills—reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, feeling, *ad nauseam*; but we have had in mind only immediate social purposes. The cultural uses of language have been excluded. We have forgotten about books. We have failed to remember that as teachers of English we are concerned not only with the teaching of skills: we are also interested in the transmission of values.

In the freshman course we must concentrate on the power of language—its development and its use in our own day, especially in the written form. But more than that, we should make sure that the student is introduced to some of the great masterpieces of literature, in all their richness and depth; we must open up for him the world of literature. We do not achieve this by having him read Mr. Hayakawa's chapter on literature, but by having him read literature itself. Literature must have a definite and prominent place in the freshman course. The introduction of literature in the freshman course should not be considered subsidiary, "to be introduced *only to the degree* that it can be demonstrated to serve the end of clear and effective writing," as was stated by the workshop members discussing the objectives of the composition course at the 1950 conference. Readings, these workshop members agreed, should be chosen with two purposes in mind: models and subject matter. Literature, they further stated, should be limited, should come late in the course, should be designated as something apart from the central material of the course.⁴ Perhaps this was the solution of these workshop members to the problem raised by Mr. Karl Dykema during that same

conference: how to keep the student from associating the painful process of mastery of mechanics with literature and the realization of values literature can offer.⁵ A better solution, it seems to me, is suggested in the *Harvard Report*: "Training in composition should not be associated with the English Department only. It should be functional to the curriculum, a significant part of the student's college experience."⁶ Composition would then be the concern of all departments; but it would still remain an essential part of the work of the English department, for language and literature are not easily separated. Mr. Thomas Clark Pollock stated it succinctly in his president's address to the National Council of Teachers of English in 1948: "If language is the central tool which a man must learn to use if he is to be civilized, literature is the supreme civilizing agency."⁷ Literature should not only have a definite and prominent place in the freshman course: it should be the core of the course.

Why literature?

First of all, as teachers of the freshman course, we have been trained in the study of literature, we have an abiding interest in it, and we are more at home in the field of literature than in any other field. Then, why not teach it?

Secondly, literature is a valid course of study. In the study of literature the student is confronted with an intellectual pursuit equal to that of any other field. The study of literature is not a waste of time that has nothing to offer fine young minds. The freshman course need not solicit such student remarks as "English again: the same old stuff!" We ought rather to make the student feel, in the words of Jane Austen, that it is, after all,

⁵ *Ibid.*, II (May, 1951), 3-5.

⁶ *General Education in a Free Society: Report of the Harvard Committee* (Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 199.

⁷ *College English*, X (February, 1949), 250.

⁴ *College Composition and Communication*, I (May, 1950), 9-11.

the place "in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humor are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language."⁸

In the third place, English has always been, and should continue to be, the essential course in the humanities. In too many of our colleges the freshman course is still the only required course in the Department of English. Like the teacher of the elementary foreign language courses, however, we have persisted in making the freshman course a skills course only. As teachers of English, we are also interested in the dissemination of values; and we ought not to relegate this interest only to our teaching of the English major or the non-major who selects a course or two later on in his college career. We ought to seek to transmit a sense of values also in the freshman course, and that is done through the study of literature, which both describes and evaluates life. In the study of literature in the freshman course we can help young men and women to dream dreams and to create a vision of life.

Finally, the study of literature can help the student in his writing. Literature should not be used primarily to furnish models of good writing; nor ought its primary purpose be to provide subject matter. To a certain extent it does both, but it must not be simply a tool of composition. Its primary purpose in relation to composition should be to provide motivation. I do not think it is true, as Mr. Conant says in his *Education in a Divided World*, that "as yet the motivating forces are lacking to awaken real enthusiasm for literature in many young boys and girls."⁹ Literature is very often, and can be even more often, its own motivation.

How, then, ought literature be presented in the freshman course?

The freshman can be taught some of the fundamental principles involved in literary technique; he can be shown the position literature occupies as an authentic intellectual discipline. He must be brought face to face with the intrinsic values of literature: the enjoyment, the enrichment, the possibilities of spiritual and intellectual development that can be his through a concentrated study of literature. The study of literature ought not be arranged by subject matter in order to teach behavior patterns, good manners, or social graces. The freshman may pick up incidentally a few tips on how to balance a tea cup, or to carry on a polite conversation, or to teach in high school; but our chief aim is not just a well-formulated "growth toward maturity."¹⁰ We must include literature with many facets, involving the fundamental issues of life; but these issues should not be geared to the vocational interests of the students, for that is to deny the human values of literature.

Perhaps the best way, if there is such a thing, is, during the second semester, to study literature by types: the short story, the novel, the drama, poetry. If there is to be any arrangement in the course, it could be on the basis of difficulty. The freshman usually likes the poetry of Robert Frost and Edwin Arlington Robinson, and from there he can go on to others. He likes the drama (Shakespeare excepted), but most of all he likes the novel. Why not start there, even during the first semester? An exciting adventure, a little love, some magic, a villain or two: what else does the freshman want? Whet his appetite, get his interest, and it will not be long before we will also have his appreciation for literature. He may still enjoy his Anyfaces and Prunefaces, but he may also discover

⁸ Northanger Abbey (Everyman, 1949), p. 22.

⁹ Harvard University Press, 1948, p. 135.

¹⁰ The English Language Arts (Appleton-Century-Crafts, Inc., 1952), p. 375.

that there are values in life that will force even a red-blooded American boy to bake a turnip-upside-down cake to help the one he loves.

With literature as the core of the freshman course, almost anything can happen. Usually the instructor will be more enthusiastic, and as he goes so goes the class. Since imaginative writing involves not only hard thinking but also creative insights, the student will be brought face to face with some of the intellectual problems of the day. This is achieved not by simply showing the relevance of literary study to the contemporary world; but the stimulation of interest comes primarily because the student

has been brought into the company of the masters. This stimulus is more noticeable in super-freshman classes, but it is not lacking among the sub-freshmen. The study of literature in the freshman course will attract good students to major in English. But, most important of all, the writing will be better; for, somehow—I know not how, the study of literature results in many things unexpected. It is a fascinating adventure—even for the freshman, for the freshman, too, is “such stuff as dreams are made on”; and literature can be his key to a “brave new world.” It may not help him to achieve something to live *by*, but it will aid him in finding something to live *for*.

Literature in English A at Northwestern

HARRISON HAYFORD¹

Literature has an important place in the freshman course at Northwestern. Before I explain just what place it has, I want to show why we are for it. For if I simply stick to literature and its place in our course, you could not be satisfied with my explanation. Nobody, I suppose, is likely to be particularly satisfied to be told that students in a composition course can improve their own writing by studying well-written selections that provide rhetorical or stylistic models, or introduce significant ideas, or otherwise help develop the students' minds. And nobody wants to deny that students ought to know how to read literature and that they get something valuable from studying it. These are commonplaces. I admit that our giving a place to literature in the freshman course at Northwestern rests on these commonplaces. Our course is an accommodation of the traditional freshman composition and literature course. That fact is reflected in its still-carrying the traditional label “English A.” The students read es-

says, short stories, poems, and plays; they write themes connected in one way or another with the readings. In class and conferences they discuss their reading and writing.

This kind of course will not seem satisfactory to everyone today. Questions arise.

As we see it, the traditional course which combines composition and literature, as the basic freshman course, has been under pressure during the past ten years or so, from two sides. (Perhaps I am begging the question by defining this kind of course at the beginning as a sort of mean between extremes. In any case, I warn you, that is where I am going to place it.)

From the left (let us say) the “Communication” wing of the attack has raised some searching and realistic questions.

1) Why should a basic freshman course, these days, be a course in “*composition and literature*”? Shouldn't the basic course give up such a narrowly literary, “English-Department” bias and

¹ Northwestern University

deal not with "composition and literature" but with writing and reading, of the everyday sort its students will have to do in the contemporary world? (In its lowest form, from parents and from colleagues outside the profession, this is the question: why don't you get rid of all this fancy writing and literature, and just teach 'em how to spell and punctuate and read something and know what it says?)

2) Furthermore: why should a basic freshman course, these days, restrict itself to writing and reading? These are communication skills. But what about speaking and listening? These are two equally essential skills in the communication process. Why not go at all four communication skills systematically and clinically, in an up-to-date way, in terms of what tests show that each student actually needs?

3) Again, why shouldn't the basic course deal not simply with the "literary" levels, but with the mass media of communication, which are and will be so much more significant in the actual lives of the students?

4) Why should the basic course have no subject matter of its own? Why shouldn't the reading and listening, writing and speaking, that go on in the course, be *about* some coherent and relevant subject-matter, not about miscellaneous, irrelevant, or indifferent things—ships and shoes and sealing-wax and trapping the wily muskrat? Or what's a freshman engineer to Hecuba, or Hecuba to him, that he should communicate about literature? One valid subject matter, considering the student, could be the student's own personality, life, and developing experience, his "real problems." Or a second such subject matter, considering the area of the course, communication, could be the whole subject of communication itself: language and linguistic processes—structural, rhetorical, lexical, and cultural. This could include

semantics, group dynamics, and mass communication.

Questions such as I have thrown together under these four points have been raised; and as you know, many good courses have been developed on the lines indicated by the questions. Neither the objections to the traditional course nor the objectives of the communication sort of course can be dismissed.

But the traditional course has been challenged during the same ten years from the opposite side. From the right, the "humanities" or "general education" wing of the attack has asked questions, too, of another bearing, and perhaps equally valid ones.

1. Do, or at least should, college freshmen need to be given what is really high-school or even grade-school, instruction in reading and writing, or communication skills as a whole? If they do, shouldn't such illiterates be refused admission to college, or at best, if they seem to have other qualifications, be remanded to non-credit, sub-freshman courses or clinics? Shouldn't the basic freshman course, in other words, *be* a college-level course, not essentially a remedial course or high-school "Language Arts" course under a more imposing name?

2. If the humane values derived from literature are so significant, and its instrumental values as model and motivation in composition are so necessary for mature writing, why shouldn't the basic course be *primarily* a literature course, not the simple, contemporary, half-way literature now used, but great books, by great writers? Composition could grow from consideration of these great works.

3. As to the objectives stated for the communication courses, would not students who had grappled with great books, who had even glimpsed their scale of human and literary values, who had written papers in the light of these great models, be equipped, *a fortiori*, to read and evaluate all lesser forms both within

literature and below it, in the mass media?

Good courses, you know, have been developed on the lines indicated by these questions from the right. Neither their objections to the traditional course nor the objectives of such "humanities" or "general education" courses can be dismissed.

Well, where does this leave us? What do we do? Which is better: a communication course or a Great Literature course?

I think various ways out of this apparent dilemma are not too difficult to find.

Most such either-or choices dissolve upon examination.

Yesterday morning at breakfast three of my children were "communicating." The problem, raised by Debbie, aged 4, was: "Which is better, Cooked cereal or Dry cereal?" Debbie rather thought dry cereal is, because she wanted some Dry and we had only Cooked. Alison, aged 8, defending the *status quo*, and resisting both change and the one who was proposing it, and just to be different, said, "No, Cooked cereal is better." Then Ralph, aged 10, pointed out to Alison, "You don't eat it, so why should it be better for *you*?" To which she replied, "Listen, Ralphie! You're a big fat interfering dope—so be quiet." "Well," says Ralph, ignoring the *argumentum ad hominem*, "you can take Dry cereal on a camping trip." (He was defending his choice in the light of context relevant to his purposes.) Alison then decided to rise above the argument with a classically fair solution: "They are both better," she declared. To which he replied, "How can they be better than each other?" And she followed through: "Cooked is better for some people, and Dry is better for others." Which settled the argument. And I don't have a better answer essentially, to our problem: which is better: a communication course, or a great-literature course? One may be better for

some students; one may be better for others.

I have been struck, in attending these conferences for the past several years, and following the various discussions of this subject, by the fact that too seldom do advocates of one position or another explicitly formulate the question thus: what kind of course is better, or best, for the students at my particular college? I think most of us are in fact thinking in these terms, but we tend to project what is best for our particular students, in the light of our experience, into a universal. So that we seem to be saying: this is the best kind of courses, period. In short, we don't consider these curricular problems explicitly in their local context, or go on to see, or at least to say, that two kinds of courses can be better than each other;—that is, given different colleges with different student-groups, one may be better for one group, and one for the other. And possibly some sort of compromise, or eclectic course may be better for still a third. (This, we believe, is so for Northwestern.)

Is it not true, in general, that communication courses have been instituted and have proved their value, in institutions with a non-selective or not highly selective admissions policy? That is to say, on the whole, have they not made their largest contribution in tax-supported institutions which because of their admission policy must cope with a larger number of students poorly prepared in skills of basic communication? Are not such courses confronting, in a realistic manner, a problem of democratic education, one passed on to them by the understaffed and overburdened high schools? I do not believe this problem can properly be solved by giving such students Plato and Plotinus for a friend; or by refusing them admission; or by passing the problem back to the high schools at this point.

On the other hand, is it not true that great-literature courses, as basic fresh-

man courses, have been instituted and proved their value in institutions with a selective admissions policy, usually liberal arts colleges with a relatively homogeneous student-group? That is to say, don't we find them in institutions which do not have to confront, with most of their students, the problems which communication courses are designed to meet?

I have indicated that Northwestern, as we see our situation, lies somewhere between these two kinds of institutions. It is a private university, with an admissions policy such that we simply do not confront in our freshman course very many students who require basic sub-freshman work in reading or writing. Most really do need instruction and practice in composition, and most are required to take a speech course. On the other hand, the 1300 students in the basic course are not just the Liberal Arts freshmen but all the freshmen in the University, from the schools of Commerce, Journalism, Education, Technology, Music, and Speech, as well as Liberal Arts. Neither their proficiency in composition and reading, nor the purposes for which their

separate schools require them to take the basic course would justify us in subordinating composition and centering the course upon great literature. (Again, this diversity of schools means that we have not been able to plan, as have some institutions, a unified two-year sequence, solving the problem by putting a communication-oriented course in one year, and a literature course in another.) Working in this context, we have sought to plan a course which tries to pay attention to the imperatives of both of the movements which have criticized the traditional course. Naturally, it would be impossible to do in one basic freshman course *all* the things that validly might be done. Some selection has to be made. We emphasize composition because we think it is what the students most obviously need and what focusses the educative processes germane to the area most usefully for them and for us as their teachers. We use literature, to come finally and briefly to the point, for all the reasons I have suggested along the way

....
(Further remarks were curtailed in delivery because they duplicated what other participants had already said.)

Reading for Fun at Little Rock

GLADYS K. BROWN¹

Literature is the backbone of each of the two six-hour credit courses in English for freshmen at Little Rock Junior College. One course is required of all entering freshmen; the other is open to those of sufficient maturity² to profit by taking the course.

The six-hour required course has a rigid plan made and remade over a long period of years. It evolved from the old standard rhetoric and composition course which included some literature. It is still

orthodox in some respects though perilously unorthodox in other respects. The plan devotes about two thirds of the time to reading and one third to writing. The time required by the course may be said to be at least two hours outside the classroom for every one hour in the classroom. About two thirds of the reading is in exposition and one third in drama during the first semester; in the second semester about two thirds in narration with exposition and description as aids and one third in poetry. The readings in both semesters are chosen from twentieth-century English and American literature.

¹ Little Rock Junior College

² "Sufficient maturity" is determined by records, test scores, age, and experience shown by the student in his preregistration conference with his adviser.

There are two *sine-qua-nons* of the course: an experienced teacher and an adequate library of open shelves. All the shelves in the college library, except the Arkansas Collection, are open to students. We want our students to shelf-shop. During the first weeks of the beginning semester students are instructed in the uses of the library through an illustrated lecture given by the instructor or by a librarian either in the classroom or in the library. In the lecture students are made acquainted with the catalogue and the shelving system. Each is given a chart of the floor plan locating various divisions. He is invited to browse in "his" library and especially in the periodicals room.

Our college library numbers around 25,000 books specially chosen for the two-years' work. In addition to the shelves limited to a maximum of four copies of any one book, there are housed in the college library many sets of books which belong to the Department of English. A "set" may be twenty-five copies, or seventy-five or a number equal to the total number of students enrolled in the required course, or for individual choice it may be fifteen copies on reserve for freshmen. Books may be checked out by whole sections according to the choice of students and instructor. The instructor signs and gives to each of his students a card known as the "bluecard" on which is printed a total list of sets of books especially for freshmen. At present the following twenty-two titles are listed on the bluecard:

Chief Modern Poets, Writer's Resource Book, Essays for Our Time, Meaning in Reading, Modern Plays (Tucker), Seven Modern Plays, A Book of Modern Plays, Short Stories in Context, Modern American Literature, Study of Literature, The Old Man of The Sea, College Handbook, Communication of Ideas, Modern Drama (Hatcher), Language in Thought and Action, A Modern Repertory, Return of the Native, 20th Century Plays, Preface to Critical Reading, Short Stories for Study,

Modern Reader, Federalist Papers.

Over a long period of years success in teaching has increased through interest and enthusiasm aroused by choice of readings. Students discover books for the whole section to read. They hear from sophomores about plays, stories, novels, and poetry to be read in and out of the classroom. Some actually get to be freshmen in college, you know, without ever having learned to read a book for fun, and have never experienced reading a play in such way that it surpasses a movie. We frankly teach reading for fun to be found on any level from the drunken soldier's joke, the lousy pun, the Juanesque choice of language to that most flattering trick of the dramatist which gets the reader to understand what one actor says to the other actor, who does not understand, or gets the reader to laugh at some dupe who doesn't see his own situation.

Plays wholly in dialect are avoided. In the second semester the reading of poetic dramas is encouraged for choice of outside reading—those by Millay, Peabody, Stuart Walker, Yeats, Synge, Masefield, Maxwell Anderson, T. S. Eliot, Christopher Fry, Robinson Jeffers, and others.

The choosing of prose of high readability and essays of some elevation in sentiment and beauty is encouraged. Prose characterized by distinctive and individual rhythm is emphasized for those who show writing ability above that of the masses and have an interest in their own development as writers. Some such influence as that from constantly reading Shakespeare on Virginia Woolf's style is pointed out as significant. One does not read Lewis, Dreiser, or Faulkner for *clausulae*. One may cultivate a growth of his own individual style certainly not by imitation but by choosing his general reading in books which as literary compositions rise above a too common level.

It is the great challenge for the instructor of freshmen to transform the "section" attitude from, "Well, here we are; what can you do about us?" to "I must, I can, I will." I have found the best of literature to be the only means of transformation. It does work sometimes.

So much for the six-hour course required of all entering freshmen; now for the six-hour course open to those giving promise of a certain degree of maturity.

This additional six-hour course is patterned partly in choice of reading after those courses styled World Literature and Great Books, and in classroom procedure chiefly after Great Books and Adult Education courses. It makes use of an exit-the-instructor method. It is a roundtable conversation based on the reading of a book. Fifteen to eighteen books are read and discussed during each semester. Since no instructor can foreknow the ability and ambition of any group before the first meetings of the class, it is best to decide upon a "safety ten" books for student purchase and depend on the library for the other books. Economically that is safe, too; ten books may be had at an average of fifty cents. Again the English Department must buy its own books which must be housed in the general college library.

After designating World Literature and Great Books courses as models, it is with some temerity that I state that as an opener I have recently used with success Robert Nathan's *Portrait of Jennie*. In another class I used *Member of the Wedding* with success; in a third I tried *Barefoot in Athens* with success and followed it with the *Apology* and *Crito* and was none too happy. The section which began with *Portrait of Jennie* as number one ended with *Crime and Punishment* as book sixteen and were in great delight over their accomplishment once they had by-passed the hurdle of a splendid introduction on graduate level. I could be a Carry Nation carrying a pla-

card: *Out with Introductions* except those written by the author of the book. But I must say I have forgiven the publishers ten times over because I have within the last month been able to purchase from them an excellent fifty-cent edition of *Gulliver's Travels*.

Students were allowed to say when and what one of their ten purchased books should come in the following week. When they made their choice of Cicero to come early in the semester, I suggested that they reverse the order in the book by beginning with "Of Old Age." They took the suggestion but bogged down as I expected in "Of Offices." Some were lost by the wayside in "The Prelude" but not many. All the other books except Cicero on the list met with a satisfactory measure of success.

The section that began successfully with *Barefoot in Athens* and floundered in *Crito* and the *Apology* several times were troubled. They were asked to read parts of *Faust* (Bayard Taylor's translation) aloud in class and in turn they asked the instructor to read a large section of *Agamemnon*. *Agamemnon* was the only part of *The House of Atreus* read. But later, on several occasions, they showed dissatisfaction at not having "taken" the whole book. They also expressed dissatisfaction over buying a whole volume of plays and having to read only one play—*Tartuffe*. One man said boldly, "I read all the plays in the book"; then added challengingly, "I liked them. I had never heard of Molière."

My degree of lack of success I attribute not so much to the order of books as to not having an easy opener. I have resolved that the next time I look at a section of male humanity averaging in age at least twenty-three years, I shall begin with the Penguin *Jurgen*. And after that I shall probably be represented on the page with the caption *Teachers Available*.

May I read three paragraphs from

Cabell's Foreward to *Jurgen* in closing?¹

"To the contrary," says Jurgen, "I am a poet, and I make literature."

"But in Philistia to make literature and to make trouble for yourself are synonyms," the tumblebug explained. "I know, for already we of Philistia have been pestered by three of these makers of literature. Yes, there was Edgar, whom I starved and hunted until I was tired of it: then I chased him up a back alley one night, and knocked out those annoying brains of his. And there was Walt, whom I chivvied and battered from place to place, and made a paralytic of him: and him, too, I labelled offensive and lewd and lascivious and indecent. Then later there was Mark, whom I frightened into disguising himself in a clown's suit, so that nobody might suspect him to be a maker of literature: indeed, I frightened him so that he hid away the greater part of what he had made until after he was dead, and I could not get at him. That was a disgusting trick to play on me, I consider. Still, these are the only three detected makers of literature that have ever infested Philistia,

thanks be to goodness and my vigilance, but for both of which we might have been no more free from makers of literature than are the other countries."

"Now, but these three," cried Jurgen, "are the glory of Philistia: and of all that Philistia has produced, it is these three alone whom living ye made least of, that today are honored wherever art is honored, and where nobody bothers one way or the other about Philistia."

"What is art to me and my way of living?" replied the tumblebug, wearily. "I have no concern with art and letters and the other lewd idols of foreign nations. I have in charge the moral welfare of my young, whom I roll here before me, and trust with St. Anthony's aid to raise in time to be God-fearing tumblebugs like me, delighting in what is proper to their nature. For the rest, I have never minded dead men being well spoken of. No, no, my lad; once whatever I may do means nothing to you, and once you are really rotten, you will find the tumblebug friendly enough. Meanwhile I am paid to protest that living persons are offensive and lewd and lascivious and indecent, and one must live."

¹ Modern Library, 1934, pp. [5-6].

NCTE-Sponsored Tours of Europe, Summer, 1956

The National Council of Teachers of English sponsors three European tours this coming summer, primarily to places rich in literary associations but also to sites of general scenic and historical interest, art museums, theatres, and concerts. NCTE has originated the project, tour leaders are NCTE members, and NCTE will issue to each participant a certificate showing completion of an educational tour. However, travel details will be handled entirely by Study Abroad, Inc., 250 West 57th Street, New York 19, and NCTE will derive no profit. The cost of each tour is well under usual costs for guided tours and is inclusive except for registration (\$15), and passport fee (\$10), and personal expenses.

All three tours leave New York on July 6 and return to the same point on August 24. The ocean is crossed by chartered plane owned and operated by a major

airline. Special ship travel can be arranged for an additional charge of \$50.

Tour A, Western Europe (\$895), provides generous coverage of the British Isles with about two weeks in the Low Countries and northern France. Tour B, Southern Europe (\$985), visits the Low Countries, northern and central France, northern Italy, the Rhine country and the areas about London. Tour C, Northern Europe (\$1075) beginning in Scotland, travels south then north in England, to the far north of Norway, southern Sweden and Denmark, and with a trip to Berlin, departs from the Low Countries.

Tour A will be conducted by Professor and Mrs. Robert J. Greef, Central Missouri State College, Warrensburg; Tour B by Miss Helen Thornton and Miss Irene Rhodes, Arsenal Technical High School, Indianapolis; and Tour C by Miss Elizabeth Almén, 1000 Twenty-

fourth Street, Des Moines, and Professor Louis Almén, Augusta College, Rock Island, Illinois.

Each tour will be limited to about 25. For registration forms, write Study Abroad. A deposit of \$200 and the \$15 registration fee are required upon en-

rollment, the deposit being refundable until May 20 if cancellation becomes necessary. Each person interested who cannot take a tour in 1956 but might in 1957 should communicate his interest to NCTE headquarters to assure plans for a 1957 program.

CCCC Bulletin Board

New National Council of Teachers of English officers for 1956 are President, Luella B. Cook, recently retired Consultant in Curriculum Development, Minneapolis Public Schools, and continuing consultant for the reading program of *Reader's Digest* and for the Educational Testing Service; First Vice President, Helen K. MacIntosh, Chief, Elementary Schools Section, U. S. Office of Education; Second Vice President, Jerome W. Archer, Professor and Chairman, Department of English, Marquette University, and Chairman of CCCC, 1954-1955. Our congratulations and best wishes go to them in their new and continuing responsibilities.

Welcome is extended to three new members of the Editorial Board—and ex-officio members of the Executive Committee. Regularly elected according to provisions of the Constitution, Article IV, Section 3, are George Arms, University of New Mexico, and Ferdinand J. Ward, C. M., DePaul University. These members will serve through 1958. Robert J. Thorstensen, New York State College for Teachers at Albany, was elected to complete the term, through 1957, of Board member Glenn J. Christensen, Dean of Lehigh University, whose administrative duties forced him to withdraw. To Dean Christensen and W. Nelson Francis, Franklin and Marshall College, retiring after three years, go our sincere thanks for their services to *College Composition and Communication*.

Special recognition must be given to the retirement of George S. Wykoff as editor of *College Composition and Communication* after almost three and a half years of service (fourteen issues of CCC, from October, 1952, through December, 1955). Even the best-informed of past and present CCCC officers could scarcely give a full account of his services, many of which have been anonymous and extra-curricular.

All members—but one—are delighted at his success in fattening the usual issue of CCC, twenty-four pages when he took over, to sixty pages. Even sixty pages became so confining that he has entertained the hope of being able to afford the addition of a cover-paper which would allow him two more pages of text. Moreover, he edited CCC almost single-handed; members of the Editorial Board found their duties pleasantly light. The meaty section "Some of the Year's Work" has been his special pride; to discover items for it he systematically scanned nearly sixty professional periodicals.

Less known to most members has been his function as a voluntary one-man membership committee in large part responsible for more than tripling membership in the last three years. He not only signed them up, but infected them with a degree of his own enthusiasm for CCCC. Fortunately, he will continue this function with T. A. Barnhart on a duly appointed Membership Committee.

His other services are too multifarious

to be itemized, but they have all contributed to the soundness, growth, and usefulness of CCCC. This notice will embarrass him, but it is due.

NCTE Executive Secretary Hook announces substantial growth in CCCC membership during the last two months of 1955 to bring January 1, 1956, circulation figures for CCC to 1,156. Total circulation of all NCTE journals is just over 33,000. CCC circulation will continue to grow if all members will renew promptly, sign up their colleagues and neighbors, and see that their institutions receive CCC and shelf it in the library.

The University of Illinois, according to the *Champaign-Urbana News Gazette* of December 20, will not, after the school year 1959-60, offer Rhetoric 100, the sub-freshman, non-credit course in English fundamentals. Advanced warning is given so that Illinois high schools may strengthen their college-preparatory training in English.

This action was not taken hastily, nor primarily in preparation for rapidly swelling enrollments, though it is the type of stiffening state institutions in particular may be forced to adopt if quality of instruction is to any degree maintained. Charles W. Roberts, Chairman of Freshman Rhetoric, has long advocated dropping subfreshman English in view of the steady and alarming rise in the percentage of entering freshmen at Illinois requiring remedial work. With no change in procedures of selection or placement test, percentages sent into Rhetoric 100 rose from 14.1% in 1943-44 to 29.8% in 1955.

Evidence of the patience called for in making such a change is the report, seen in mimeographed form by some CCCC members, of the Senate Committee on Student English proposing this change

on 7 June 1954. The Department of English endorsed the proposal on 1 February 1955. Final action by the Trustees is the basis of the news story of 20 December 1955.

Mr. Roberts will give a fuller account of the action in the May issue of *College Composition and Communication*.

Have you felt a desire to secure for your students reprints in quantities of occasional articles in NCTE journals, especially *College Composition and Communication* and *College English*? Francis Christensen, University of Southern California, has, and raises a new version of an old editorial problem—how to provide offprints and reprints at reasonable cost to author, journal, and purchaser. Cost is high if offprints are ordered with a regular issue, and it becomes prohibitive when reprints are ordered after type has been scattered. The editors and Secretary Hook could gamble by ordering a stock of offprints they guess might be in demand, but that course is not very sound for a non-profit organization. Your suggestions will be welcomed by Secretary Hook or the CCC Editor.

The Central States Speech Association will hold its annual convention in Chicago at the Hotel Sherman, April 6 and 7. Featured discussions will be headed by Earnest Brandenburg, charter member of NSSC, on "Communication"; Kenneth G. Hance, Northwestern University, on communication in business and industry; Thomas Dahle, Michigan State College, on "Communication Research Problems and Methods"; Carl Dallinger, State University of Iowa, on "What Has Experience Taught Us About Communication Skills Programs." Inquiries should be directed to Wayne N. Thompson, Executive Secretary, University of Illinois, Navy Pier, Chicago 11.

Some of the Year's Work in College Composition and Communication

Teachers for Tomorrow, Bulletin No. 2 of the Fund for the Advancement of Education, 655 Madison Avenue, New York 21, New York, through elaborate graphic charts, analyzes and presents the problem of swelling school and college enrollments as it bears upon the preparation of teachers. The facts behind the report appear to have undergone the severest scrutiny, but a list of twenty-four selected readings is provided for those who wish to inspect the facts for themselves.

Although the report focuses upon public schools, colleges are incidentally represented as part of the whole picture and as places where school teachers are trained. To fulfill their own needs, we read, "colleges and universities will have to add more teachers in the next 15 years than in all previous history combined . . . If the present student-teacher ratio of 13 to 1 is to be preserved, for every 10 college teachers now employed, somewhere between 16 and 25 new ones will have to be found between now and 1970." As college demand for instructors increases and if business employment remains proportionately attractive, "the proportion of all college teachers with a Ph.D. may decline to roughly 20 per cent [from present 40 per cent] by 1970." Thus "the typical college student in 1965 or 1970 will almost certainly encounter fewer really able teachers than today's student."

Remedies proposed for immediate study bear mainly upon the supply of school teachers. To meet competition from industry colleges must raise salaries. Reported average annual earnings of assistant professors in large state universities, \$4,600, are just below those of railroad switchtenders; instructors at \$3,700 earned \$250 less than workers in

the stone, clay, and glass manufacturing industries and not quite \$500 more than telephone operators. In 1949 the percentage of physicians and surgeons earning \$6,000 or over was 29.3; of lawyers and judges 20.7; of designers and draftsmen 6.3; of college presidents, professors, and instructors 5.5; of school teachers 1.1.

Other lines of attacks suggested are stripping the curriculum of non-essentials, reducing non-teaching duties of instructors, discovering how—by closed-circuit TV and other means—good teachers can direct more students without loss of effectiveness. It is hard to escape the conclusion that almost every problem discussed by CCCC must be viewed as subsidiary to the one sharply outlined in this report.

Readers of CCC will find provocative the lengthy analysis of American informative prose by Geoffrey Moore in Mentor *New World Writing*, 8th Selection (October, 1955), pp. 47-70. Mr. Moore, teacher, writer, and British government official, was born in London and educated at Cambridge. In recent years he has taught at six American colleges and universities including the University of Kansas, Tulane, and Wisconsin.

The question that moved Mr. Moore to study American prose he was not the first to ask: Is there a distinctively American prose and does it reflect a distinctive American character? His method is to sample eight types of non-fictional prose, to present brief excerpts with critical analyses of them, and to draw certain general conclusions.

His samples are the following: of political prose, the foreword of Adlai Stevenson's *Call to Greatness*; of scientific prose, Oppenheimer's BBC Reith Lec-

tures for 1953 and Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*; of historical prose, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Age of Jackson*; critical, Blackmur's essay on Cummings in *The Double Agent*, Stephen C. Pepper's *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts*, and Randall Jarrell's *Poetry and the Age*; humorous prose from Thurber's *Let Your Mind Alone!* and John Davenport's "Slurvian Self-Taught"; letters from *Plain Letters* (U. S. National Archives and Records Service, 1955) and Lincoln; journalistic prose (newspapers) from a student editorial, an article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, editorials from the *Kansas City Star* and the *New York Times*, and (magazines) from the *New Yorker*, the *Reader's Digest*, and *Time*; and advertising prose from advertisements for Viceroy's and a G-E air conditioner.

Before undertaking this survey Moore had formed, he says, an impression that "American prose as a whole had more naturalness than the English and at its best a transparent sincerity and simplicity worthy of American ideals." His study, he found, confirmed his preconceptions of American creative prose but, except for political, critical, humorous prose, and topical commentary (E. B. White), forced him to lower his opinion of expository prose. The American cultural climate, he decides, is not conducive to the production of such prose. Our tendency to permit feelings and emotions to color and becloud writing that ought to be clear, precise, and objective, our feeling that "style" is a quality applied or removed from the outside and is better removed, our common education which relegates literature to a secondary place, and "linguistic liberalism" are identified as the main inimical forces. He deplores the "linguistic liberalism" exhibited by English professors in their own writing and in the writing accepted with approval from their students. This, he declares, "perhaps partly explains

why college students' essays are such examples of bad prose." Even more disturbing "is the sheer muddle of the language, the lack of an ability, in the college group, to express ideas lucidly and coherently." In short, "American conditions, educational and otherwise, have militated against clear and graceful literary expression."

"A New Kind of Comprehension Test," by Francis P. Chisholm of Wisconsin State College at River Falls, (Fall, 1955, *Journal of Communication*) offers a refreshingly philosophic combination of principle and practice. Professor Chisholm justly points out that most published accounts of college Communication courses "have lacked definiteness of detail regarding the principles of Communication and the specific exercises by which communication skills can be improved." In addition, traditions in English and Speech departments often decide content and methods of the "Communication course." These traditions are not exactly equivalent, however, to the fundamental theory of communication by which all techniques in the course should be tested.

Professor Chisholm then lists two basic principles which encompass the essence of this fundamental theory, while disavowing any attempt to describe at length the complexity of the processes involved.

1. The relationship between what the speaker says and what the listener hears is **not** a one-to-one symmetrical relationship.
2. But many people **behave** as if the relation . . . were one of simple equality.

The "new kind of comprehension test" is designed to teach explicitly an awareness of this asymmetrical relationship between speaker (or writer) and listener (or reader). The training materials deal with familiar subjects treated from unfamiliar points of view (e.g., a

Marxist analysis of U. S. movies). After presentation of the material, students are offered ten or fifteen statements on a printed form with three answer columns labeled: A, "What I heard"; B, "What he said"; and C, "What I think." After students have marked A and C, the text of the passage is distributed; instructor and students fill in B together. Discrepancies between A and B measure the accuracy of the student's listening. "The format of the answer sheet forces on the student the structural fact that 'What I heard' is not 'What he said' while still recognizing the student's right to have his own opinion. However, whenever 'What I think' corresponds to 'What I heard' and differs from 'What he said,' the student 'sees the record of his own projecting.'"

The further instructional uses of the test are exciting. Professor Chisholm indicates several. He also offers the fine assurance that such exercises which "give students from actual experience a knowledge of the structure of the process . . . have a definite and observable effect in changing student communication habits." JEAN MALMSTROM.

Two articles and a book review in the Winter, 1955, *Journal of Communication* give new information on the condition of communication at Michigan State University.

Martin Stevens in "The Place of the Novel in the Communication Program" defends at length the Communication Skills staff's decision to "make room for imaginative literature in its course." He denies the course's intention "to infringe upon other academic areas"; he asserts the truisms that "the novel [as the form of creative literature chosen for use by the staff] provides a basis for serious thought and stimulates an intense, vivid analysis of human problems," influences "leaders of our society," furnishes "vivid illustrative material" for teaching and

can "add luster and direction" to many assignments.

Russel L. Jenkins' "New Names for Old" states that the course title, Communication, has caused all kinds of trouble between teacher and teacher, student and teacher, graduates and employers, teacher and parent-taxpayers. Therefore, "perhaps we need to choose a new term to replace 'communication' which will force us to recognize that communication means 'the process of sharing ideas, understanding and responses to language symbols.'"

The review by *Journal of Communication* editor, Francis Cartier, of *The Basic College of Michigan State* offers an interesting contrast to these two articles. Cartier calls Paul Bagwell's chapter describing the Communication Skills course "the best available statement of the rationale of the so-called 'communication movement.'" Since Professor Bagwell is head of the department, he should know what he is talking about when he "examines [the course's] basic assumptions . . . sets forth in detail the objectives of the course, explains the emphasis on skills and the relation of skills to content . . ." One wonders whether Messrs. Stevens and Jenkins would agree with Editor Cartier's conclusion that Professor Bagwell's chapter "may well become the classic statement of what a communication course should be and why."

Howard H. Martin writes of "The Course at Allegheny College" in the Winter, 1955, *Journal of Communication*. Allegheny has had a course aimed at treating writing and speaking as aspects of a single skill since 1932. In 1951, this course became "G-1," the first of nine courses in General Education. Since then the course has developed a conscious rationale which is described in the following series of basic assumptions:

1. Writing and speaking can best be learned as aspects of a single skill.

2. Writing and speaking are no more than the extensions of ideas chosen and ordered in the mind.
3. The principles of effective communication are few and relatively simple; skill can be developed only with practice and continual evaluation.
4. Good expository writing can be as brilliant, as arresting, as enjoyable to read and to create as narrative writing.
5. Students can be interested in significant ideas to the point of wishing to write and speak about them.
6. Students learn more and learn more rapidly when they are personally involved in the learning process, when they participate in discussions of principles and their applications, when they perform in writing and speaking, when they criticize themselves and others.
7. The discovery and arrangement of ideas is more important than . . . skill in delivery or . . . grammatical conventions.
8. Students should be given the tools . . . to evaluate their ideas and should be continually encouraged [to use them.]
9. Good teaching changes students . . .
10. Teaching is as good as the amount of imagination and enthusiasm that goes into it.

We applaud the assumptions of Chairman Martin and his enthusiastic staff, especially the last two. JEAN MALMSTROM

Communication and the Communication Arts, the November, 1955, issue of the *Teachers College Record*, presents a symposium of nine articles, a progress report, and an extended selective bibliography emanating from the Interdivisional Committee on Communication and the Communication Arts. Guest editor for this issue is Francis Shoemaker.

The Committee, which directs a comprehensive course in the subject, a research seminar, research and other activities, has existed since 1943—as has the course. It visualizes the reorientation required by the introduction into educational thinking and practice of so new a concept as communication as occurring in three stages: (1) broad, preliminary

exploration, (2) tentative use in various parts and stages of the educational process, (3) use of the results in stage 2 to recheck and extend basic exploration and assured application of tested procedures to instruction. The Committee considers this symposium to represent emergence from stages 1 and 2 into stage 3.

The nine contributors and their articles are as follows: Solon T. Kimball, "Anthropology and Communication"; Irving Lorge, "How the Psychologist Views Communication"; Philip H. Phenix, "A Philosophic View of Communication"; Howard F. Fehr, "Communication of Scientific Thought"; Joseph T. Klapper, "Studying Effects of Mass Communication"; Marshall McLuhan, "A Historical Approach to the Media"; Francis Shoemaker, "Communication Arts in the Curriculum"; Louis Forsdale, "Helping Students Observe Processes of Communication"; Lennox Grey, "Test Case."

Robert P. Stockwell, Foreign Service Institute, Department of State, "Teaching English as a Second Language," *The CEA Critic*, May, 1954. Much recent interest in the subject is due to the large proportion of Fulbright teaching positions for teachers of English as a foreign language and also to the influx of many students not native speakers of English. "The repair of their English usually falls to the lot of an English instructor, or perhaps to a graduate assistant, for whom it is a chore even worse than marking freshman themes." Until recently, there have been no good texts, and the weakness of all has been that they are written in English, not in the language of the student. Now new texts, aimed at foreign students entering American colleges, and fusing sound pedagogy and accurate linguistic research, are being prepared for the teacher of English as a foreign language—in Spanish, Indonesian, Korean, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Burmese, Vietnamese, Greek, Persian, Thai, and Chinese, with an instructor's manual for the whole series available, *Spoken English as a Foreign Language*.

As example, the Indonesian text is reviewed in some detail, with comment on its one hundred lessons in twenty groups of five lessons each, each group consisting of a set of basic sentences followed by pronunciation, grammatical information, grammatical drill, and review.

Supplementing the previously summarized article, Leo L. Rockwell, Colgate University, in "Our New Responsibility" (*The CEA Critic*, September, 1954) calls attention to the difference in teaching English as a second language when the teachers are British or American. He recommends some additional texts: Charles C. Fries' *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*, books by Fries and Pauline Rojas and Virginia French Allen for use with Puerto Ricans, and Ellen Walpole's *Golden Dictionary*. As for the qualifications of the teacher, the author says: "The preparation of a teacher of English as a foreign language demands quite a different background and attitude from that of the teacher of English-speaking students. He should, of course, know fairly well the native tongue of the students he is teaching—not to use it, but to be aware of the difficulties English offers. He should also know American English better than most American teachers of English, and be thoroughly familiar with the civilization of the United States, as few of us are. Indeed, an undergraduate major in American studies, with a strong minor in one foreign language and good courses in linguistics, the history of English, and area studies, might well be the ideal preparation. He should, of course, know the modern methodology of successful language teaching by the oral approach."

Donald Lloyd, Wayne University, "We Are to Blame," *The CEA Critic*, May,

1954, comments on Lewis F. Ball's "A Little Learning Is a Dangerous Thing," *The CEA Critic*, April, 1954 (See summary, CCC, May, 1955). He believes that the poor English of college freshmen is due, not to the Educationists, but directly to the college departments of English, who "really rule the primary and secondary roost." Those teaching in the latter are, in large proportion, coaches with spare time, art teachers, mathematics and science teachers, and even assistant principals; and the schools possibly got the idea from the college departments of English whose graduate schools give no training to prepare a man to teach English composition—or even to teach.

The present situation and trouble: "College departments of English generally do not give any training for the teaching of composition, and generally they do not demand any of the teachers they hire. They don't really care whether composition is well-taught; they assign the work to the newest and youngest teachers, and to the old and inept, who are not good enough for advanced courses in literature. They staff hastily, at the last minute, satisfied if they can dig up somebody who can stand up in front of a class, textbook in hand. They do not promote good composition teachers; what they pay them, I hesitate to mention. They promote only potential professors of literature; they offer tenure only to these. Is it any wonder that nobody in the school system takes the problem seriously? Who will, if we don't?"

The proposed solution: "Let's master the English language, as it works in our country today, as a system in itself. Let's master the relations of this magnificent instrument to the other activities of the community, for it penetrates them all, and when it fails, they falter. Let's master the nature of language habits and how they develop in the growing human being. Let's master the relation of speech to writing, of language to literature. And

then let's see that our own students master these things, right in our own departments, and send them out prepared to teach. The schools would bless us, and the students would, too."

The author concludes with the warn-

ing that if English continues to be so badly taught in the schools, the Educationists, who now blame themselves, will realize where the fault really lies, and will move in to make the necessary improvements.

Secretary's Report No. 15

GLADYS K. BROWN¹

Minutes, Meeting of Executive Committee, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Room 121, Hotel Commodore, New York City, November 24, 1955, 12:00 noon to 3:30 p.m. Chairman Jerome Archer presiding. Members present: Archer, Beal, Bowersox, Bowman (for Wykoff), Brown, Gibson, Griggs, Hook, Shoemaker, Steinberg, Thomas, Tuttle, Van Gelder, Wise. Visitors: Dykema, Grommon, Kelly, Sutton.

1. Associate Chairman Griggs and Program Chairman Shoemaker reported plans well under way for the Spring Meeting—Thursday, Friday, Saturday, March 22, 23, 24, 1956—at the Statler Hotel, New York City. Francis Shoemaker distributed copies of an eight-page 'Working Draft of Program.' Herman Estrin was announced as General Chairman (local) and Burtin Pollin as Associate Chairman for Finances. There was much clarifying discussion of details, such as registration fee, book-exhibitor's space fee, cost of mailing programs, total budget; nearly all of which business was left to the decision of Chairmen Griggs and Shoemaker and their committees.

2. Gladys K. Brown, Secretary, reported the results of the March and September ballots: (a) Of the 409 postal card ballots "for" or "against" the Proposed Revisions of CCCC Constitution, 186 were returned, unanimously "for revisions." (b) Of the 682 "1955 Official

Elections Ballot," 136 ballots were returned and showed an overwhelming majority for each name presented on the slate. *Officers* elected for 1956 are: Chairman, Irwin Griggs; Associate Chairman, Francis Shoemaker; Assistant Chairman, Robert Tuttle; Editor, Francis Bowman, for a term of three years. Members of the *Executive Committee* elected (each for a three-year term): Catherine Adler, Russell Cosper, Mary E. Fowler, Nelson Francis, Albert Grommon, Bryson Jaynes, James McCrimmon, Stewart Morgan, Leon Reisman, Paul Roberts, Ralph Singleton, William Sutton, John Weimer.

Members of Board of Directors, NCTE (each for a three-year term): Richard Beal, Mrs. Margaret Blickle, Mrs. W. R. Van Gelder.

3. The report of J. N. Hook, Treasurer, made and copy filed, shows a balance in the treasury of \$3,028.34, as of November 1, 1955, and a membership of 1,076—a phenomenal growth from the membership of 382 as of November 1, 1954!

4. Editor-elect Bowman, acting for Wykoff *in absentia*, presented the names of five candidates for the Editorial Board; all were unanimously approved by the Executive Committee. Invitations were sent to and acceptances received from Ward, Arms and Thorstensen who constitute the new members on the Editorial Board. Jean Malmstrom remains liaison officer between CCC and NSSC and CSSA and will continue her reports.

¹ Little Rock Junior College

Bowman was granted his request of retaining the same printer of CCC and permission to retain the same cover with certain minor changes. There was some discussion of off-prints being cheaper than copies of CCC for the Kelly report. The matter was left to Mr. Hook and committee.

5. It was moved, seconded and passed that the 1957 Spring Meeting be in Chicago and tentatively at the Morrison Hotel with Falk Johnson as local chairman. Those having made investigations for the years 1958, 1959 and 1960 introduced various items for discussion. The whole matter was left for the March Meeting where it will be presented through the report of a committee—Bowersox, Grommon, Beal, Van Gelder—appointed to study the situation.

6. In relation to the Spring Program Bowersox led a discussion advocating shorter prepared talks by members of panels and much greater exchange of ideas between members of the panels. Shoemaker made clear his plan for a definite initial structure set up through the help of Bob Cook, an expert on chairmanship. After further discussion a committee with Erwin Steinberg as Chairman was appointed to work out a little manual to be sent to an individual at the time of his being invited to be on a program. Others on the committee are Robert Tuttle, Francis Shoemaker, Dick Wells. A report was asked for the March

Meeting from the committee.

7. Recommendations of CCCC Membership Committee were presented on mimeographed pages by Irwin Griggs for T. A. Barnhart *in absentia*. Acceptance of the report was moved, seconded and passed. It was requested that the Secretary mail a copy to each Committee member not present at the November business meeting. The Chairman-elect will appoint a new Membership Chairman since Barnhart announced he prefers an "idle year."

8. George Kelly reported his just completed Survey of Teacher Load principally concerned with the first semester of the freshman composition. Questionnaires were sent to 150 colleges. There were 84 usable replies of the 112 returns. Immediate interest sprang up as to how to keep current an established norm. It was moved, seconded and carried that Kelly and his committee present a plan at the March Meeting for continuing the work.

9. Secretary Brown reported that Placement Service was of at least some help to twenty-two colleges and universities and about thirty-three individual instructors. It was taken for granted that the Placement Service would continue during the Spring Meeting, 1956.

10. Volunteers were asked for to take charge of CCCC exhibit during the convention; no one volunteered.

A Preliminary Research Assignment for College Freshmen

RALPH RENWICK, JR.¹

The perennial debate over the research paper owes its existence in part to discouraging practical difficulties. In one assignment of limited duration the instructor must train his students in a variety

of important techniques. With what often seems a headlong rush his charges plunge into topic selection and limitation, use of the library, organization of materials by a card system, final writing and formal documentation. Therefore a short preliminary research assignment

¹The Basic College, Michigan State University

requiring some of these skills would be more than appropriate. Hoping to reduce the combat strain of a research unit due to begin in two weeks, I introduced such a project in two summer sections of the communication course at Michigan State University.

Having on hand a sizeable number of recent copies of *Time* and *U. S. News*, I asked each student to take one of the magazines and write a paragraph of about 250 words on the handling of some news subject.¹ Defined more fully, the assignment required the study of evidence found in the issue concerning the attitude of the editors toward the policy or behavior of some group or individual in public life with regard to a specific issue or problem. This provision afforded freedom of choice in topics and fitted the weekly shift of emphasis in the magazines. Thus the student could write about President Eisenhower, Stevenson, Republicans, Democrats, party groups, cabinet members, organized labor or agriculture—about a wide range of public spokesmen. He could choose from an equal variety of issues: European policy, Asian policy, welfare legislation, fiscal matters, the guaranteed annual wage—whatever seemed prominent in his copy of the magazine.

An assignment designed for practice in so many skills—limitation of topic, selection of materials, documentation, paragraphing—called for much detailed briefing. After a preliminary class discussion of pertinent readings², including material on inferences, judgments, and slanting, from Hayakawa's *Language in Thought and Action*, careful instructions were given. Ideally the student's first step is to determine a central topic for

the paragraph. His task is to examine the magazine coverage for evidence of impartiality or of bias: for loaded words, slanting, editorializing in reports, or for the absence of these. Whether he considers the editors to be impartial is perhaps important for his understanding of mass media, but irrelevant to the instructor's evaluation of his essay; the student simply makes a decision about his copy of the magazine and supports it. Having come to a judgment about the news coverage, he next gathers evidence. He uses several different articles, both for a fair sampling of the work of the magazine, and for acquiring skill in handling more complex footnoting. Moreover, he confines his research to regular sections of the magazine. While the special articles usually found in *Time* and *U. S. News* may reflect editorial leanings, the student cannot always be expected to find evidence of sustained policy in the feature article of a single issue; the regular sections are fairer ground for the limited kind of content analysis this assignment involves.

In working the evidence into a paragraph, the student relies on his own wording, taking care to write independently of the phrasing or sentence-structure of his source, and to acknowledge all direct quotations. His footnotes give sources not only for paraphrased reports and short quotations, but for at least one quotation long enough to be set apart, indented, and single-spaced. Finally, he carefully follows the particular footnote system used in the course so that he will be familiar with it when beginning his full-scale investigative report.

Although it fails to fulfill all the objectives of the assignment, the following theme exemplifies some of the better results obtained:

Time magazine is pro-Eisenhower. The magazine finds little fault with Eisenhower and his administration, but Democrats do not fare so well. *Time* gives the impression that Eisenhower, in spite of the Democrats,

¹ A similar proposal for using newspapers is presented without detail by Elizabeth Wright, University of Illinois, Chicago Division, in *College English*, January, 1956, p. 238.

² From William G. Leary and James S. Smith, *Think Before You Write* (New York, 1951), pp. 68-78.

is undertaking and accomplishing policies that are best for the United States. In the report of a recent press conference Eisenhower is described in a flattering manner: he was "cheerful, grave and hopeful"; he weighed his words carefully; "the theme of peace was on his mind."¹ On a recent trip the President was greeted by "cheering roadside crowds."² One of the President's opponents, Democratic Senate Leader Lyndon Johnson, is not treated so well. Senator Johnson had a heart attack at the "estate" of a "Houston contractor and lavish contributor to (his) political campaigns."³ In a previous interchange between Eisenhower and Johnson over the legislative program of the Senate Johnson "tossed a few political taunts toward the White House."⁴ The President answered these remarks in an angry way, but *Time* was quick to imply that this anger was for the public's welfare.⁵ Johnson then "lashed back" at Eisenhower for those angry remarks.⁶ *Time* then went on to report that several of the bills Eisenhower had asked for in anger had been passed.⁷ There was one exception in the bills reported. The bill for the atomic peace ship was defeated because all the Democratic senators, except one, had voted against it.⁸ These examples of *Time*'s reporting indicate that *Time* is definitely pro-Eisenhower.

At the end of the term anonymous class reactions were sought by means of a questionnaire (results indicated in parentheses):

¹ "The Presidency," *Time*, 66 (July 11, 1955) 15.

² *Ibid.*

³ "The Congress," *Time*, 66 (July 1, 1955) 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

1. Was this assignment valuable as preparation for your investigative paper?
Not worth the time spent (4)
Fairly valuable (5)
Definitely valuable (22)
No opinion (0)
2. Was it valuable as a study of magazine reporting?
Not worth the time spent (0)
Fairly valuable (5)
Definitely valuable (22)
No opinion (4)
3. Was it interesting?
Not worth the time spent (1)
Fairly interesting (12)
Definitely interesting (17)
No opinion (1)

The questions were followed by a space for general comments, of which these are typical:

It was an interesting and worthwhile assignment. It broadened my outlook on reported news.

I think better ideas of the magazine's outlook would come from a study of several issues.

I think the research preliminary was of definite value. It helped me to learn what could be expected on the term paper.

Those who considered the assignment not worth the time spent furnished no general comments; however, the sample student paper shows clearly the need for greater stress on careful analysis of the reporting studied. As a whole the papers written on this assignment showed a tendency to summarize rather than analyze. Despite the need for further refinement, however, I feel that the assignment served its purpose, and that it was "definitely valuable."

Devices for Teaching Organization in Elementary Composition

BERTHA M. KUHN¹

Many students rebel against the discipline of organization in writing. They want to put ideas down just as they come to mind. Since only a few students think in an orderly manner, the major-

ity of the papers will wander and repeat unless the students set up a pattern or outline.

Here written composition correlates well with speech. If the class is taking beginning speech, the instructor should

¹ University of Washington

point out this correlation. Sometimes in conference a student will tell his instructor that he is using the same topic for a written composition and for a speech. This practice should be encouraged because the student will see by the class reaction to his speech whether his subject is clear enough for the hearers to pick out his main points. He will also discover that having these points written on a card will help him to stay on the subject and to follow an order that holds the interest of his hearers. This is a practical use of the outline.

One class hour in composition given to brief talks by the students will demonstrate to the class how a clear pattern helps them to understand each other. Class criticism will show where one speaker makes his point and where another wanders around the subject without giving much definite information. These brief talks also emphasize the advantage of narrowing the subject and breaking it down into a few related points that progress in a pattern. A talk on the ways in which a large city high school discourages race prejudice presents an example of finding a workable outline to use next for a written theme.

Because of the students' tendency to avoid the discipline of the outline, the alert instructor must provide other ways of checking organization. Students can report on plans for themes in advance of writing the assigned paper. Some or all outlines can be put on the blackboard and criticized and revised by the class. If the classroom does not provide enough blackboard, reading the outlines aloud for class criticism will help the student see his faults in organization, often before others can point them out to him. Perhaps his subject is too broad, such as "education," where a short paper of from five hundred to a thousand words obviously cannot cover the subject. When the papers become longer and the out-

line complicated, the students can be asked to hand in the written outline for the instructor's suggestions for revision before handing in the written theme. Outlining has a number of established conventions which can be pointed out in this way by the instructor's reference to sections in the students' handbook on composition. Because an outline is an exercise in classification, soon the students will enjoy putting apparently miscellaneous ideas into a logical arrangement.

Because of the popularity of quiz programs on radio and television, students react with interest to class tests which are brief and clear. Fifteen minutes given to putting a scrambled outline in order shows the value of classification of ideas under main and subheads. A scrambled outline is a list of numbered sentences taken from an outline and arranged out of the original order. If a key or summary sentence is given as the central thought of this outline, though listed as one of the numbered sentences, the students will soon discover this key. If this sentence takes the main topics in order, then the main divisions of the outline can be found by number from the numbered sentences. If class time cannot be used for writing out the unscrambled outline, a copy of the original outline can be given to each student so that he can see where his own interpretation differs from the original. When the students have the experience of writing three or four outlined themes, an outline test will show the instructor which students have mastered organization and which still need help. The test may present the problem of writing an extempore outline on a subject not yet discussed in class. Also, completing and correcting an unfinished outline which contains some faults in subordination and coordination will test the student's sharp thinking and knowledge of outline technique.